United Nations A/63/119

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 July 2008

Original: English

Sixty-third session
Item 124 of the preliminary list*
Pattern of conferences

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly addressed a number of requests to the Secretary-General on issues relating to conference management. In compliance with those requests, the present report covers the utilization of conference-servicing resources, the impact of the capital master plan, integrated global management and various issues pertaining to documentation, translation and interpretation. In addition, the report outlines progress made in the implementation of specific initiatives related to the improvement of conference services, proposes means to address current challenges and puts forward suggestions to the Assembly as to what steps could further contribute to the optimal functioning of the management of conferences at the United Nations.

* A/63/50.

08-42427 (E) 150808

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I. Introduction

1. The main objective of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is to ensure optimal quality of conference management services in a cost-effective manner, with equal treatment given to all official languages of the United Nations.

2. Structured efforts to achieve this goal, undertaken in the past few years, are currently beginning to bear fruit: documents management and conference management have benefited from a much improved and structured system of conference planning. As the Department's counterparts grow more conversant and comfortable with, for example, more robustly applied slotting deadlines and document page limits, significant improvement in the effective and efficient utilization of conference-servicing resources is being achieved.

3. The Department is concomitantly pursuing the implementation of its integrated global management initiative, which includes actions aimed at improving coordination and harmonization of policies, practices and procedures across the four duty stations. Important information technology solutions are being developed to maximize the use of common processes in reporting, meetings management and documentation planning and processing.

4. A further subject of increased attention is the United Nations capital master plan: the Department remains fully committed to ensuring that the implementation of the plan does not affect the quality of the services it provides. Fulfilling that commitment will remain a challenge and the Department is exercising vigilance and sparing no effort to ensure that it is afforded the necessary human and financial resources that this commitment entails. The Department has communicated the anticipated challenges, concerns and possible bottlenecks to the Executive Director for the capital master plan in order to ensure that conference services are provided to all intergovernmental bodies in a smooth manner.

5. Another challenge resides in the rapid attrition of language staff through retirement, which, together with markedly depleted or non-existent rosters of candidates for recruitment in some languages and services, and local market conditions, make succession planning and quality assurance difficult. Strategic workforce planning is being pursued to enable the Department to ramp up recruitment and training in order to ensure continuity in the quality and experience of staff in all language sections.

6. In all its aforementioned actions and others detailed in the present report, the Department has exercised deliberate prudence to ensure that it remains in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly regarding all aspects of its work.

II. Integrated global management

A. Status report

7. Integrated global management, by its very essence, is not a limited time project, but rather a continuing process of a highly collaborative nature. Only through a modus operandi which privileges cooperation, dialogue and a strong

orientation towards action can the dual requisites of increased integration and acknowledgement of the specificities of the various duty stations result in the positive synergy that can yield concrete and visible results.

8. The discrete sections of the present report illustrate a number of sectors and specific activities in which the application of integrated global management is already producing the desired outcomes, and other activities that are moving forward within a preparatory, pre-implementation stage. The implementation of integrated global management has benefited from increased dynamism in the inter-duty station coordination process, the annual meetings of which are giving a new thrust to the efforts undertaken, inter alia, through the adoption and implementation of time-bound action points.

9. Part of the integrated global management effort has concentrated on the further fine-tuning and implementation of the compendium of administrative policies, practices and procedures adopted by all duty stations in 2006. Areas in which progress has been achieved include management of lateral transfers of language staff between duty stations, exchanges of staff, the consolidated roster for contractual translation (which will become operational in September 2008), harmonization of slotting procedures and advance waiver management, as well as workload forecasting and capacity planning. The progress of the integrated global management initiative is under constant review and will be the subject of a more comprehensive evaluation in the course of 2009.

10. The Working Group on Publishing, established in 2007, has already issued an initial inventory of publishing technologies across the duty stations. A task force, led by the United Nations Office at Geneva, has been set up to extend workload forecasting and capacity planning systems to such other areas of conference management as text processing and copy preparation.

11. The integrated global management process has also resulted in significantly enhanced cooperation, both formal and informal, between the Department and the regional commissions of the United Nations. The latter participate in the annual coordination meetings of conference managers as observers and are represented on the global terminology coordination project. An effective staff exchange programme with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has been put into place, where the translation services at Headquarters have assigned a senior reviser to ECA in exchange for a translator at the P-3 level. Through lateral transfers, the regional commissions have benefited from experienced language staff from Headquarters who have already acquired the level of expertise needed to function without additional training or supervision. The transfer of information technology applications developed by the Department has enabled the commissions to upgrade their conference-servicing information technology applications in a cost-effective manner.

12. Finally, it can be noted that the integrated global management process has also triggered significantly more intensive exchanges of lessons learned and good practices among the duty stations in all areas of work, whereby the experience gained is easily and often seamlessly transferred from one duty station to another.

B. Global information technology initiative — integrated conference management system

13. The integrated conference management system, a component of the global information technology initiative, is being actively pursued. The system benefits from the knowledge garnered and lessons learned from years of utilization of duty station specific information technology solutions which have been extensively customized to meet local requirements. The development of the integrated conference management system is taking on added significance given the ongoing development of systems for enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, and enterprise content management which implement various enterprise-wide strategies that address common business processes and are based on common data and technology platforms at the organizational level. The development of the integrated conference management system takes into account future interface and data exchange with and among other enterprise systems. As detailed in the section below, the system is divided into three projects: (a) global integrated reporting; (b) global solution for meetings planning and servicing; and (c) global solution for documentation planning and processing.

Project 1 — global integrated reporting

14. A global reporting data warehouse is envisioned to bring transparency to the operational data across all duty stations, establish the common standard via the statistical framework and codification structure, provide integrated reporting and serve as a basis for supporting performance management in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. The reporting database is envisioned to support the most immediate reporting requirements, including but not limited to the following: capacity utilization of all resources; forecasted capacity at the global and local levels; group productivity of resources across the duty stations; reports on production statistics. Reporting will be based on common statistical indicators in the conference management area at all four duty stations, aligned and grouped into four functional groups:

(a) *Documents management*: slotting, submission compliance, processing compliance, issuance compliance, waiver management;

(b) *Documentation service*: editing, translation, contractual translation, referencing, concordance, copy preparation, text processing, reproduction, distribution;

(c) *Meetings management*: utilization of meeting services and facilities;

(d) *Meetings servicing*: interpretation service, précis-writing, verbatim reporting.

The development and deployment of the core components of the data warehouse is expected to take approximately one year.

Project 2 — global solution for meetings planning and servicing

15. Taking into account the recommendations contained in the 2006 Dalberg Report, the outcome of the project 2 requirement workshops to evaluate the Siebel customer relationship management system and to validate duty station-specific requirements, and the decisions of the information technology governance board,

the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management authorized the allocation of $1.2 million to allow the United Nations Office at Vienna to continue this project. The decision to allocate those funds entailed proceeding with internal development and integration using customer relationship management-compatible products, in line with the overall Secretariat-wide strategy on enterprise applications. Delivery of e-Assignment Programme modules of the integrated conference management system and deployment at the four duty stations are anticipated by the end of 2008. Delivery of meetings planning and servicing modules and services is anticipated by the end of 2009 according to the schedules indicated in the integrated conference management system solution architecture.

Project 3 — global solution for documentation planning and processing

16. The project 3 global workshop, held in Geneva in May 2008, addressed in-depth the business process requirements in order to reach a common understanding among duty stations. Specifically, it reached an agreement among the four duty stations on the streamlined and aligned business processes and associated business requirements, as documented in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management documentation planning and processing process compendium, and the definition of the substantive scope and the evaluation method for a proposed functional prototype for testing. Development of the prototype based on a Documentum platform by the United Nations Office at Geneva in cooperation with the other duty stations and the International Computing Centre is currently under way, with a total budget of $150,000 and delivery scheduled for October 2008. The prototype will focus on six key functionalities and would leverage the Official Document System-proof of concept developed internally at the United Nations for future interface and data exchange with enterprise content management-based systems.

C. Performance measurement

17. In section V, paragraph 14, of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly noted the performance measurement matrix proposed by the Secretary-General in response to the request to develop a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement and management from a full-system perspective and looked forward to receiving the indicators for all duty stations beginning in 2008.

18. The performance matrix for 2007, which provides indicators for human resources, finance, meetings management and timeliness of documentation, as well as productivity measures for the language services, is contained in annex VI of the present report.

III. Evaluation by Member States of the quality of conference services

19. The Department circulated a client survey on conference services to representatives of Member States during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. The survey, which was distributed in meetings of the Security Council and the Main Committees of the Assembly, collected data on the performance indicators identified in the strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009. The

questionnaire, which was also available from http://emeets.un.org, was issued in all six official United Nations languages.

20. In order to improve the survey methodology and increase the response rate, the 2007 survey was revised in consultation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The response rate in 2007 of 41 per cent was considerably higher than that in previous years (13 per cent in 2006, 19 per cent in 2005 and 20 per cent in 2004). The higher rate of participation could be attributed to the following factors: the decision to test the survey with the members of the Committee on Conferences in September 2007; the consultations held with committee secretaries and the Meetings Servicing Unit; and the role played by the Committee chairmen. The questionnaire related to the quality of Department for General Assembly and Conference Management services, including translation, interpretation, quality of support services by the meetings servicing assistants and the timely provision of documents and information. It also sought to elicit feedback on the main expectations of Member States and suggestions for improving the quality of the services. According to the survey results, Department services were rated excellent or good by 81 per cent, fair by 16 per cent and poor or very poor by less than 3 per cent of respondents. The three main expectations identified were timely issuance of documents, good customer service and good quality of interpretation. Other suggestions included improvement to online tools and the committee websites, the distribution of documents and interpretation services.

21. The Department continues to explore innovative ways to collect and analyse feedback. As part of these efforts, a database was developed to collect ad hoc feedback on the quality of Department services from all sources, be it by telephone, e-mail, in person, or by regular mail. The database will collect feedback not only from Member States, but also from committee chairpersons and other clients. The database makes it possible to monitor the status of actions taken in response to complaints. Another measure taken by the Department to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of conference services is the "feedback card", which will be made available in the conference rooms and will enable Member States to make suggestions and provide comments about Department services.

22. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management at Headquarters held two rounds of informational meetings with Member States on the quality of language services in 2007, from 23 to 27 April and from 19 to 21 November and 14 December, respectively. A summary of the meetings can be consulted in the files of the Secretariat. The United Nations Office at Geneva conducted language-related informational meetings between delegations and representatives of the language services (including interpretation, translation and editing). The participants requested a specific survey to provide delegations with a dialogue mechanism on terminology quality and the implementation of multilingualism. A common approach to comply with this request is under study and would involve all duty stations.

IV. Meetings management

A. Calendar of conferences and meetings

1. Requests to meet during the regular session of the General Assembly (exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243)

23. In section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 40/243, the General Assembly decided that no subsidiary organ of the Assembly might meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

24. Every year, a number of requests for exceptions to that rule are received. In accordance with established practice, the requests are first submitted to the Committee on Conferences, which then makes a recommendation to the General Assembly.

25. Annex IV to the present report contains the requests received to date from subsidiary organs of the General Assembly to meet at Headquarters during the sixty-third session of the Assembly, as well as relevant statistical information on the sixty-second session of the Assembly. Requests received subsequently will be issued in an addendum.

2. Draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings for 2009

26. The draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings for 2009 will be issued as an addendum to the present report and as an annex to the report of the Committee on Conferences to the General Assembly.

B. Improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

1. Meeting statistics of United Nations organs and analysis

27. The statistical data on the planned and actual utilization of conference resources allocated to a core sample of bodies that met in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi in 2007 are contained in annex I. They also include issuance compliance and availability indices for assessing the timely issuance of pre-session documentation and the week-by-week availability of such documentation.

28. *Utilization factor*. As shown in the following table, the overall utilization factor for 2007 remained at 83 per cent, the same figure as in 2006, which is 2 percentage points lower than the factor in 2005.

29. The overall utilization factor is computed by totalling the data in the six columns for all bodies in the four duty stations and treating them as if they reflected a single body, as follows:

Duty station	Number of meetings							Utilization factor			
	A (programmed)	B (added)	C (cancelled)	D (held)	E (reassigned)	*	F (minutes lost)	2005	2006	2007	**
New York	1 203	36	187	1 052	100	34	30 235	83	81	79	74
Geneva	570	21	29	562	6	—	9 965	90	87	87	87
Vienna	180	3	2	181	—	—	3 010	87	85	90	90
Nairobi	28	0	1	27	—	—	—	95	100	96	96
Total	**1 981**	**60**	**219**	**1 822**	**106**	**34**	**43 210**	**85**	**83**	**83**	**79**

* Related reassignments.

** Utilization factor, counting only related reassignments.

30. A detailed breakdown by body of the utilization statistics shown above is contained in annex I. The categories for determining utilization in 2007 are the same as before. Credit for reassignment(s) in column E was given regardless of whether the body to which the services were reassigned was related to the originally scheduled body or not. Column (*) shows only reassignments to a related body, and column (**) indicates the utilization factor that would result if only related reassignments were counted. The time utilized for informal meetings or consultations held before the start, after the adjournment or instead of the officially scheduled meetings, when utilizing the same services and with due notification given to the Secretariat, is not recorded as time lost.

31. For purposes of comparison, the following table provides a breakdown of the utilization factor for the bodies in the sample for the period from 2005 to 2007.

Utilization factor (percentage)	Number of sessions		
	2005	2006	2007
0-19	1	—	—
20-29	—	—	—
30-39	1	—	—
40-49	—	1	2
50-59	—	1	1
60-69	5	6	5
70-79	11	15	15
80-100	50	45	45
Total	**68**	**68**	**68**

32. Thus, 66 per cent of the bodies in the sample had a utilization factor of 80 per cent or higher in 2007, the same figure as that reported in 2006, which is 8 percentage points lower than in 2005 (74 per cent).

33. *Meeting ratio.* The following is a breakdown of the meeting ratio for the organs represented in the sample from 2005 to 2007.

	Number of sessions		
Meeting ratio (percentage)	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*
10-29	1	—	—
30-39	—	—	—
40-49	1	—	—
50-59	2	—	1
60-69	—	4	2
70-79	5	3	3
80-89	7	8	10
90-100+	52	53	52
Total	**68**	**68**	**68**

34. Thus, in 2007 91 per cent of the bodies in the sample had a meeting ratio of 80 per cent and above, as compared with 90 per cent in 2006 and 87 per cent in 2005.

35. *Planning accuracy factor.* The following is a breakdown of the planning accuracy factor of the bodies in the sample from 2005 to 2007.

	Number of sessions		
Planning accuracy factor (percentage)	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*
0-39	5	2	2
40-49	—	—	2
50-59	3	—	1
60-69	1	6	6
70-79	5	3	5
80-89	12	12	11
90-100	42	45	41
Total	**68**	**68**	**68**

36. Thus, in 2007 76 per cent of the bodies had a planning accuracy factor of 80 per cent or higher, as compared with 84 per cent in 2006 and 79 per cent in 2005.

37. **At 83 per cent in 2007, the overall utilization factor remained at the same level as that reported in 2006 and decreased by 2 percentage points as compared with the figure reported in 2005. It is worth noting that the overall utilization factor remained above the established benchmark of 80 per cent; however, the utilization in New York showed a 2 per cent decrease. At 79 per cent in 2007, as compared with 81 per cent in 2006 and 83 per cent in 2005, the figure returned to the same level as that reported in 2004. The utilization factor that would result if only related reassignments were counted remained at the same level in 2007 (74 per cent) as in 2006 and increased by 4 percentage points as compared with 2005 (70 per cent). The ratio of related reassignments from the overall number of reassignments increased to 34 per cent in 2007 (34 of 100)**

as compared with 32 per cent in 2006 (39 of 122) and with 9 per cent in 2005 (17 of 195).

2. Joint task force to analyse the formula used to determine the utilization factor

38. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management created a joint task force with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to examine and analyse the formula used to determine the utilization factor.

39. The Statistics Division suggested some alternative ways to quantifiably measure the utilization of conference services allocated to intergovernmental bodies, which were reviewed by all four duty stations. The combined response was that the suggested fine-tuning would result in overcomplication of an already complex formula. Previously, some members of the Committee on Conferences had expressed the view that the current methodology was too complicated. In addition to the added complexity, the proposals did not yield significant changes in the end result.

40. A full report on the work of the task force can be made available upon request from the secretariat of the Committee on Conferences.

3. Consultations with and letters to bodies concerning the utilization of the conference services available to them

41. In order to identify measures to improve the utilization of services, in accordance with section II.A, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 62/225, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences, assisted by conference management and with the participation of the technical secretariat, consulted chairpersons of bodies that consistently utilize their conference-servicing resources below the established benchmark figure. Consultations also take place between conference management and the technical secretariats of bodies that consistently underutilize services throughout their sessions. These consultations focus on actual past utilization patterns, the duration or number of meetings and allocated services. Adjustments in actual servicing, but not in entitlements, are considered and implemented with the consent of the bodies concerned.

4. Provision of interpretation services to meetings of "as required" bodies

42. "As required" bodies are New York-based bodies listed in the calendar of conferences and meetings that are entitled to meet on an ad hoc basis over and above any sessions with fixed dates for which budgetary provision was made. Statistics on the provision of services to such bodies in 2007 are included in annex III to the present report.

43. In section II.A, paragraph 7, of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly took note with concern of the information provided in paragraph 38 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2) and requested the Secretary-General to take measures to improve the planning of conference resource allocations with a view to ensuring that the bodies entitled to meet "as required" receive adequate conference services.

44. In the past, far fewer meetings of "as required" bodies (see list in annex III) were held. This has changed in the last few years, however, as new bodies have been

created, for example, sanctions committees and the Peacebuilding Commission, while bodies that already existed have begun to meet more frequently, for example, the Economic and Social Council. Although such meetings are often informal, the need for interpretation is often no less crucial than for formal meetings, but the unpredictable nature of these bodies has meant that the required services could not always be provided at the requested time. Consequently, in an effort to address this state of affairs, starting on 1 January 2007, the Department put in place a strategic reserve of three additional meetings per week specifically to accommodate these bodies.

45. The Division of Conference Management at the United Nations Office at Geneva, notes that the Human Rights Council, established in June 2006, has a conference-servicing entitlement of no fewer than three sessions per year, for a total duration of no less than 10 weeks. The mandate was supplemented by the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/62/125. As the Office did not have a strategic reserve in 2007, the unscheduled and rescheduled meetings of the Human Rights Council and its machinery significantly strained services, resources and capacity. The General Assembly recognized the strong demand that the Council is placing on interpretation capacity at the Office and authorized an additional team of interpreters for 2008-2009. The Council's workload has continued to increase and the first four months of 2008 saw 880 meetings with interpretation compared with 638 meetings for the same period in 2007, an increase of 38 per cent.

46. As the Secretary-General previously reported (A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2), the strategic reserve put in place at New York Headquarters resulted in an improvement in the provision of services to "as required" bodies there, with 74 per cent being accommodated in the period from 1 January to 31 May 2007 compared with 66 per cent in the same period in 2006. These figures, however, were arrived at by including only those Security Council subsidiary bodies that could not be accommodated from within the resources allocated daily for the Council. As this has proved to be a cumbersome method of measurement, the statistics now include all requests for meetings of Security Council subsidiary bodies. With this method, the number of meetings of "as required" bodies that met from 1 January to 1 June 2007 totalled 207, of which 181, or 87 per cent, were provided with services, an upward trend that continued throughout the year, with interpretation being provided for 411 of the 467 meetings requested in 2007, or 88 per cent. For comparison purposes, using the same statistical method, for the same period in 2006, 137 of the 170 meetings requested were provided with interpretation, or 81 per cent.

47. The volume of meetings requested by these bodies, most notably by the Peacebuilding Commission, is continuing to expand and this has led to a decline in the provision of interpretation services so far in 2008. For the period from 1 January to 30 May 2008, interpretation was provided for 188 of the 230 meetings requested, or 82 per cent, a decrease of 6 per cent over the whole of 2007. Given this decline, and especially if the volume of meetings continues to expand, the Secretariat believes it is necessary to increase the strategic reserve by approximately two meetings for a total of five additional meetings per week. Whether this is physically possible, however, would depend on the number of calendar meetings in any given week and the availability of freelance interpreters worldwide. During peak periods, as it sometimes happens that all of the freelance interpreters available are needed to service the calendar meetings scheduled, increasing the strategic reserve, even by two meetings per week, may not be a solution for a given week. Nevertheless, the

Department intends to monitor the situation for the balance of 2008 and, if the demand so warrants, put in place the additional two meetings on a weekly basis wherever feasible.

5. Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

48. In section II.A of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly recognized the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for such groups are met. The Assembly noted that the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States that were provided with interpretation services in the four main duty stations in 2006 decreased to 76 per cent, as compared with 87 per cent in 2005, and expressed its concern about the difficulties experienced by Member States owing to the lack of conference services for some such meetings. It requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore innovative ways to address this problem.

49. The statistical data in annex II are broken down by regional and other major groupings at all duty stations for 2007. The general information can be summarized as follows:

	Meetings with interpretation services				*Meetings without interpretation services*		
Grouping	*Requested*	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Percentage*	*Requested*	*Provided*	*Percentage*
New York	219	191	28	87	881	881	100
Geneva	89	65	24	73	1 086	888	82
Vienna	0	0	0	0	259	259	100
Nairobi	10	10	0	100	203	203	100
Total	**318**	**266**	**52**	**84**	**2 429**	**2 231**	**92**

50. The Secretary-General has reported previously (A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2) on ways to increase the availability of resources for servicing meetings of bodies authorized to meet "as required" and meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States by allocating specific services on a weekly basis for those meetings shown in the calendar with an entitlement to meet "as required". The impact of the strategic reserve referred to in paragraph 44 above on services available for regional and other groupings of Member States was evaluated for the period 1 January to 31 May 2007: 81 per cent of requests for meetings were granted as compared with 73 per cent in the same period in 2006. As the table in paragraph 49 shows, the upward trend continued throughout the year, with 191 of the 219 requests for meetings with interpretation being granted for the whole of 2007, or 87 per cent, as compared with 199 of the 261 requests being granted in 2006, or 79 per cent.

51. For the period from 1 January to 31 May 2008, there was further improvement. Of the 78 meetings with interpretation requested, 70 were accommodated, or 90 per cent.

52. The positive effect of this approach was reported in document A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2, although it was pointed out that the likelihood of it proving to be a permanent solution would depend on the volume of meetings of "as required" bodies, which was increasing steadily. This trend has continued throughout 2007 and into 2008, with 230 meetings of "as required" bodies being requested in the period from 1 January to 30 May 2008 as compared with 207 such requests in the period from 1 January to 1 June 2007. Despite this increase, the Department was able to accommodate 90 per cent of requests for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States in the first five months of 2008, as stated above, compared with 85 per cent in the first five months of 2007.

53. **Given the foregoing statistics for 2007 and the first five months of 2008, it is clear that the increased strategic reserve per week that was put in place for "as required" bodies is indeed having a positive effect on the ability of the Department to provide interpretation services to regional and other major groupings. A further increase in the strategic reserve, if possible, should have a stronger impact and, in the absence of the will of the General Assembly to adjust the mandate and earmark specific resources and funds to enhance predictability, remains the only way that the Department can address the problem of providing services to regional and other major groupings of Member States within existing resources.**

6. Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

54. In section II.A, paragraph 9, of it resolution 62/225, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with several Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/236, in conformity with the headquarters rule, all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies in 2006 had taken place in Nairobi, but reiterated the need for vigilance in this respect.

55. The United Nations Office at Nairobi has confirmed that all Nairobi-based bodies strictly adhere to the rule laid down in resolution 57/283 B that all of their meetings should take place in Nairobi and confirmed that all of their meetings in 2007 had been held there.

7. Conference Centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

56. In section II.A, paragraph 12, of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore means to increase the utilization of the Conference Centre at the Economic Commission for Africa, bearing in mind the headquarters minimum operating security standards.

57. The utilization statistics of the Conference Centre show that 6,266 meetings were hosted in 2007, which represents a utilization rate of 69.34 per cent, as compared with 64.13 per cent recorded in 2006 and 42.23 per cent in 2005. This increase is to a large extent the result of promotional efforts, partnerships and marketing initiatives undertaken by the management of the Centre in the spirit of section II.A, paragraph 12, of General Assembly resolution 60/236 B, by which the Assembly welcomed the conducting of a fact-finding mission to identify best practices at similar conference centres within the United Nations system, and paragraph 13, by which it requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to

ensure that the Centre establishes and develops linkages with other centres and bodies, with a view to increasing the utilization of the Centre.

58. In this respect, the following actions were taken:

- The management of the Conference Centre took an active part in selected high-profile international conventions and exhibitions (worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events, IMEX 2007, held in Frankfurt, Germany, in April 2007, and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), held in Pattaya, Thailand, in October 2007) in order to disseminate information packages and market the Centre to participants so as to attract meeting organizers at the global level. As a result, the Conference Centre at ECA is now listed as a conference venue in the annual publications and the websites of IMEX and ICCA. These activities were planned and implemented in partnership with the Addis Ababa Tourism Commission, major tour/travel operators, airlines and hotels that have a stake in promoting Addis Ababa as a conference destination

- The Conference Centre has also been advertised in specialized magazines (for example, Ethiopian Airlines in-flight magazine), while such promotional tools as brochures, pamphlets and joint publications with partners are regularly distributed. The Centre's website also has been updated and made more attractive.

C. Impact on meetings held at Headquarters during the implementation of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach)

59. In section II.B, paragraph 4, of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to keep under constant review the impact of the capital master plan on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation and requested the Secretary-General to report regularly to the Committee on matters pertaining to the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations during the construction period.

60. The attention of the Committee is drawn to new developments in the capital master plan in the past year. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/87, took note of the proposal of the Secretary-General on the accelerated strategy IV, which would supersede strategy IV (phased approach), and approved the changes in the schedule of the renovation of the Secretariat Building, the Conference Building and the General Assembly Building as proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 27 and 28 of his report (see A/62/364 and Corr.1).

61. It has been determined that there are significant advantages associated with the accelerated strategy IV. This new strategy will shorten the renovation time by reducing the total number of phases required for the renovation of the Secretariat and conference buildings. It will compress the total period for the renovation of the Headquarters complex from seven to five years, thus reducing the disruption to the operations of the Organization by two years. The Conference and General Assembly Buildings will be renovated in two phases as opposed to the three phases previously proposed. The renovation of the Conference Building is scheduled from late 2009 to late 2011. Upon completion of that renovation, the temporary North Lawn

Conference Building will be rearranged to provide a venue for the meetings that normally take place in the General Assembly Building. The renovation of the General Assembly Building will start in late 2011 and is expected to end in 2013.

62. As the Secretary-General stated in his report on the impact of the capital master plan (A/61/300), the Secretariat anticipates that there will still be sufficient conference facilities to accommodate the entire core activities required for intergovernmental organs and bodies that normally meet at Headquarters in accordance with the calendar of conferences and meetings. However, inasmuch as there will not be one-for-one replacement of conference rooms during the first phase of the renovation, owing to existing site conditions, the programme of meetings will be accommodated using a different configuration of conference rooms. There will be one less large conference room and one less medium conference room than in the existing Conference Building and the impact of the loss of two conference rooms will be minimized by making more use of the General Assembly Hall as a regular large conference room. The revised design will produce more support and office space than under the previous design, so additional caucus rooms will be available to Member States during sessions of calendar bodies. However, as the Secretary-General points out in his aforementioned report, during the renovation period, conference facilities to accommodate activities in excess of the core meetings of the Charter organs and their subsidiary bodies, such as parallel meetings, side events and meetings of regional groups, will be limited, especially during the renovation of the Conference Building (first phase).

63. The off-site swing spaces for Secretariat staff have been identified and are in the process of being designed and fitted out for occupancy. Leases have been concluded on the Albano Building, at 305 East 46th Street, between First and Second Avenues, which will house approximately 750 staff from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, on a space in the new United Nations Federal Credit Union Building in Long Island City for about 300 Information Technology Services Division staff and on a large space comprising 11 floors in an office building located at 380 Madison Avenue in midtown Manhattan for 1,700 staff. In addition, space in buildings under existing lease to the Organization, including the DC-1, DC-2 and FF Buildings, will be used.

64. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is committed to ensuring the smooth continuation of its services during the renovation at Headquarters. Maintaining the quality of services to which the membership is accustomed requires strengthening of the Information and Communications Technology Section of the Department, through the addition of temporary staff, as requested in the report of the Secretary-General (A/62/799). The strengthened structure would make it possible to provide first-line services to all Department staff and systems, and actively service staff in a timely manner over five locations. Tasks which fall to the Section include technical support, maintenance, help desk support, connectivity, training, systems performance monitoring and optimization.

65. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has over a dozen mission-critical systems which cannot be unavailable for any length of time without having a serious impact on programme delivery and they will be expected to operate smoothly with continued maintenance and support by the Information and Communications Technology Section staff during the construction period. One such system (the NICE digital recording system) has its hardware maintained and

managed by the staff of the Section. As that system will remain on-site, the supporting staff need to be co-located with it to keep it operational at all times. The systems themselves are increasingly interdependent and will have to be reconfigured and monitored while running over a distributed network that reaches all sites.

V. Documents management

A. Submission, processing and issuance of documents

66. In section IV, paragraph 9, of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly noted with concern the continued high level of late submission of documentation by author departments, which, in turn, has a negative impact on the functioning of intergovernmental bodies, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, at its sixty-third session, through the Committee on Conferences, on impediments, if any, to achieving full compliance with the 10-week and 6-week rules for the issuance of pre-session documents, including, where appropriate, proposed measures to address such impediments.

67. The impediments to achieving full compliance with the 10-week and 6-week rules for the issuance of pre-session documents were reported in document A/62/161 (sect. V.A), in compliance with the same mandate. Measures were also proposed to address the impediments (para. 77).

68. It is clear that any further improvement in the timely issuance of documents to intergovernmental organizations depends on author departments improving timely submission, since the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, as the processing department, has been able over the past two years to process in a timely manner (i.e., four-week turnaround) nearly 100 per cent of all documents submitted on time and within the relevant guidelines on length established by the General Assembly.

69. A number of submitting entities achieved 90 to 100 per cent of timely submission over the past two years, namely, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Court of Justice, the Joint Inspection Unit, the Office of Sport for Development and Peace, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations University and the World Food Programme (100 per cent); the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (99 per cent); and the Office of Legal Affairs (89 per cent). A number of other entities, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the International Civil Service Commission, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Regional Commissions New York Office, the Department of Safety and Security, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East also improved noticeably. This shows that with proper measures and determination, it is possible to make progress.

70. While the past few years have witnessed some improvement in the timely submission and issuance of documents, the overall compliance in New York with guidelines for submission was only 65 per cent in 2007 and the overall compliance with guidelines for issuance was only 61 per cent.

71. In 2007 only 37 per cent of documents in Geneva were submitted on time. The Division of Conference Management notes that these problems, especially with Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review documentation, continued in the first part of 2008. The current documentation processing capacity in Geneva is not sufficient to adequately meet the documentation requirements. This state of affairs is aggravated by the fact that most documents are submitted late, many in the wrong format, and are poorly drafted. Such was the case for the first two sessions of the Universal Periodic Review, when none of the 96 documents was submitted on time. It is worth noting that the second session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group was scheduled only two weeks after the first. In such circumstances, Member States may complain about the reduced quality of Human Rights Council documentation thus affecting overall customer satisfaction with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

1. Late submission

72. An increasing number of author departments have formulated internal timelines for the preparation and approval of documents, including the provision of input to reports prepared by other departments and the receipt of input from other departments, taking into account the dynamics of the intergovernmental process and drawing on the model timeline developed by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management on the basis of best practices.

73. Author departments have been requested by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to provide realistic slot dates based on their best "estimate" and historical patterns, always keeping in mind the mandated 10-4-6 time frame; obtain the official endorsement of intergovernmental bodies of the 8-4-4 time frame or an alternative pattern, where necessary; or inform the relevant bodies at the outset, even when the reporting mandates are adopted, that the documents will be drafted, submitted and issued late.

74. It should be noted that, paradoxically, the mandate to give priority to processing documents on planning, budgetary and administrative matters requiring urgent consideration by the General Assembly has not improved timely issuance. If history is any guide, the more the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management processes those documents on a rush basis, the later documents tend to be submitted, to the point where so many documents are now submitted so late that they simply cannot be issued early enough for the relevant intergovernmental bodies despite the best efforts of the Department.

75. The General Assembly may wish to request intergovernmental bodies to keep in mind the legislative mandates on the timely submission and issuance of documents, as well as the control and limitation of documentation.

2. Late slotting and re-slotting

76. Recognizing that the Secretariat has only limited influence over the preparation of some documents, and in response to the mandate of the General

Assembly for greater flexibility in the slotting system, the Secretariat has put in place "late slotting" for documents whose late submission is anticipated owing to force majeure resulting from intergovernmental actions, and "re-slotting" for those documents that are unexpectedly submitted late owing to force majeure. This system has provided the necessary flexibility to accommodate the documents that could not be submitted in accordance with the mandated time frame for reasons that are indeed force majeure.

77. Agreement has been reached within the Secretariat that late slotting and re-slotting requests should be limited to documents that cannot be submitted in accordance with the mandated time frame owing to decisions and/or actions taken by intergovernmental bodies and the meeting patterns of those bodies.

78. When post-session reports of subsidiary bodies to parent organs are slotted late owing to the limited time between the two sessions, or when reports of the Secretary-General are slotted late because the relevant mandates were adopted too close to the intended meetings, the need for inclusion of the outcomes of other intergovernmental bodies or the constraint of reporting cycles, the Secretariat makes every effort to inform the intergovernmental bodies at an early stage of the impact on documentation availability so that they take that information into account when preparing their programmes of work (see General Assembly resolution 33/56).

79. When reports are slotted late owing to late submission of input from Member States, the latter are constantly reminded to meet the deadlines for providing input to the Secretariat and adequate buffer time is built into the document preparation process by the Secretariat. Input submitted on time is issued as the parent document, while late submissions are issued as addenda.

80. For those departments that wish to include the most up-to-date information in the reports, updates could be provided in the form of addenda, conference room papers or oral presentations, rather than delaying the submission of the report.

81. When reports have to be re-slotted to a later submission date owing to new mandates or subsequent intergovernmental actions, efforts are made to ensure that they comply strictly with the revised slot dates and word limits.

3. Unexpected submissions

82. In 2007, in addition to late slotting and late submissions, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management received 99 pre-session documents totalling 3,754 double-spaced pages that were not slotted, that is, they were not brought to the attention of the Department until shortly before submission (or even on the day of submission), and which were sometimes lengthy and urgent. Such documents included input from Member States and other entities received after the cut-off date for the submission of the parent document and documents related to elections and nominations. To address this issue, the author departments could endeavour to build adequate buffer time into the document preparation process based on historical pattern, where applicable, set earlier cut-off dates for response and request additional slots for unforeseen elections.

4. Changes in the programme of work of intergovernmental bodies

83. The slotting schedule is based on the programme of work of intergovernmental bodies. When a programme of work is changeable, the slotting exercise becomes

difficult, if not impossible. This is evident in a number of cases where a constantly changing programme of work made the prioritization of processing almost impossible and led to the late issuance or even non-availability of documents. Together with the late submission of documents, it impacted strongly on the processing schedules of documents and forced the relevant intergovernmental bodies to consider the postponement or extension of their sessions and to constantly revise the programme of work, thereby creating a vicious cycle.

84. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has stepped up communications with committee secretaries to keep abreast of changes in the programmes of work in a timely manner, so that it can make the necessary adjustments to the slotting schedule.

85. **It should be noted that proactive document management has a ripple and a multiplier effect. Whatever is not covered could result in rush processing, which comes at a cost: financially, because of the overtime that may be required; in terms of the quality of processing (translation); in terms of the quality of consideration of reports by the relevant intergovernmental bodies owing to the limited time delegates would have to read them; and in terms of the resources spent by the author departments in preparing the reports, not to mention the negative implications for the Department's processing compliance, as documents that were submitted on time and within the word count may have to be pushed aside. The impact is multiplied several times, given the multilingual nature of official documents. Strengthening proactive documents management therefore is not just vital to the timely issuance of documents, but also to the achievement of the other goals of the Secretariat, namely, quality, productivity and cost-effectiveness.**

B. Publishing

86. The Publishing Section has continued efforts aimed at enhancing its services, making clients more aware of the advantages of existing in-house printing and distribution services. The Section in New York has just acquired a colour digital component (impression capacity rated at 150,000 per month) to add to its monochrome digital operation, which will enable some colour work to be processed by digital technologies that offer fast turnaround, on-demand printing/reprinting and optimal materials usage. Moreover, it recently enhanced its CD/DVD replication service by acquiring a technology that doubles its capacity, allowing larger jobs (over 1,000 copies) to be processed in a more timely manner.

87. Among the results of the enhancement efforts was the establishment at Headquarters of printing workload standards and the holding of several workshops (basics of electronic publishing, with 16 participants, held on 16 December 2007; publishing support services, with approximately 70 guests, held on 22 May 2008) to educate clients about the services and the processes involved in publishing. The Publishing Section in New York is about to launch a website, and there are similar efforts at other duty stations, that will allow clients to learn about the services and contact the Section in order to obtain information and guidance in placing work. As a result of the Section's outreach, several new clients have come to the Section to have their jobs printed, with positive results (for example, the United Nations Postal Administration, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed

Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and a branch of the Statistics Division in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs that had previously been printing externally).

88. The Working Group on Publishing has continued to implement a set of four deliverable outputs agreed upon by the group and endorsed at the recent coordination meeting of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management: (a) standardized reporting method for output/capacity; (b) assessment of the optimal structure of an in-house printing/distribution facility; (c) work-sharing pilot among duty stations; and (d) development of a promotion component for in-house plants to market their services to clients. Within the scope of output (a), a complete inventory of publishing technologies across duty stations, together with workload standards attached to those technologies and the products that can be produced with those technologies, has been formulated and is being refined before adoption as the "master list".

89. Recently, several experiments in work-sharing among duty stations and with the regional commissions (notably, cooperation between the Publishing Section in New York and ECA in the printing/distribution of *Securing Our Future: Report of the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa*) have proven that there are possibilities for capacity-sharing across duty stations, but more work on forecasting anticipated workload is needed in order to expand this initiative. The Working Group is planning to test other means to enhance reporting (in cooperation with the global information technology project) and promote the services of the publishing operations (including trans-promotional campaigns in all duty stations to inform clients globally of available services) in order to enhance those services for clients Organization-wide.

90. In Geneva, the latest technology high-speed digital printing presses were installed together with the latest generation laser plate-setter (computer-to-plate (CTP)) in the Publishing Service. This new equipment has contributed to efficiency gains and cost-saving measures. The five new generation machines are capable of printing 250 page impressions per minute. Consequently, Geneva has eliminated shift work. The installation of the new technology will be used for production of metal plates for the offset printing process, directly from computer files, thereby eliminating the high cost of the intermediate film and chemical process.

VI. Translation- and interpretation-related matters

A. Demographic transition in the language services

91. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management projects its need for competitive examinations on the basis of known upcoming retirements (totalling 56 in the biennium 2008-2009), a factor for unexpected staff movements and the status of existing rosters from previous examinations (i.e., the number of viable candidates remaining). It engages, together with its partners in the Examinations and Tests Section of the Office of Human Resources Management, in an annual planning exercise for the coming year. The number of examinations that can be held is dictated primarily by the capacity of the Section, which also has responsibilities for the national competitive examinations and the language proficiency examinations. It has been the case in recent years that the capacity of

the Section has not been sufficient to cover all the examinations needed by the Department's language services. Given the ongoing demographic transition in the language services, it may be necessary to provide additional temporary resources to the Section and the units in the Office of Human Resources Management responsible for recruitment of language staff. Otherwise, the Department, which is totally dependent on the Office for the organization of the competitive examinations to fill its language posts, may not be able to guarantee the delivery of its mission-critical services to intergovernmental bodies, whose deliberations require documentation and interpretation in the six official languages.

92. According to initial estimates, a minimum of nine language competitive examinations would definitely be needed in 2009.[1] However, the unexpected depletion of the rosters for English translators and English editors in mid-2008 created a critical situation that, fortunately, could be addressed by piggybacking on arrangements already being made for an English verbatim reporters examination scheduled for October 2008. Hence, seven examinations are now definitely required in 2009, while 12 others may be needed, depending on the final results of examinations held in 2007 or 2008. Moreover, high vacancy rates in the text-processing units for some languages can only be addressed through international competitive recruitment campaigns, for which the Office of Human Resources Management lacks the necessary resources. In the light of previous experience, these requirements may represent a workload that exceeds the capacity of the Examinations and Tests Section.

93. In attempting to deal with the ongoing demographic transition in the language services, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has developed a programme of outreach to universities and other training institutions for language staff, as well as to professional associations of language specialists, and has stepped up training for serving staff to prepare them for increased responsibilities resulting from the retirement of large numbers of language staff. In addition, retired senior language staff have been engaged on short-term appointments both to assist in the training and monitoring of junior staff and to provide substantive language services, with the aim of avoiding any adverse impact of the demographic transition on the quality of services.

94. In this connection, a number of measures that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has proposed in its bilateral contacts with the Office of Human Resources Management could help to ensure a more orderly succession in the language services. These include raising, or waiving, the mandatory age of separation for language staff until such time as the staffing situation in the language services has stabilized and raising the ceiling on the United Nations earnings of retirees (in order to increase availability of retirees for short-term contracts for training or to increase capacity). The current interpretation of the rules governing the ceiling on the earnings of retirees so that work days and not paid days are taken into account in the calculation is also problematic. It may be argued that such an interpretation is contrary to the clear legislative intent of the General Assembly inasmuch as it reduces the availability of retirees to the language services by about seven weeks when daily rates are applicable.

[1] English translators, French translators, Spanish translators, French verbatim reporters, Russian interpreters, Spanish interpreters, Arabic editors, English editors and Arabic copy preparers/ proofreaders.

95. Some of the foregoing measures clearly require policy decisions by the General Assembly, which, it is hoped, will be guided by the genuinely exceptional transitional period which the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management is undergoing.

B. Contractual translation and quality control

96. Following the adoption of its resolution 62/225, the General Assembly approved the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, authorizing seven new posts at the P-5 level for the translation services at Headquarters to provide additional capacity for quality control of external translation.

97. Prompt action was taken by the services to advertise the new posts and all had been filled by 1 June 2008. However, the high vacancy rates in all the translation services combined with the fact that promotions of internal candidates to the P-5 posts gave rise to "cascading vacancies" at the lower levels[2] means that there has been as yet no net increase in overall capacity. Owing to this "delayed recruitment factor" and the rules governing the staff selection system, the impact of the creation of the seven new posts will not be fully felt until well into the second year of the biennium.

98. Nonetheless, the services have taken special measures to step up quality control checks. All have designated a senior reviser at the P-5 level to serve as focal point for quality control and these focal points are now meeting regularly to develop a uniform approach to quality control, including common criteria for inclusion of contractors in and removal of them from the roster. Reference and terminology materials have been provided to contractors on DVD through the Contractual Translation Unit and will also be made available directly to them on the Internet, on the Department's off-site portal (http://dgacm.org). The translation services are communicating directly with the group of contractors translating into their language in order to make the latter aware of information resources available to them and to encourage increased interaction between contractors and the in-house translation services, as well as to make contractors more conscious of the need to strive for high quality in their work by alerting them to the fact that quality control checks will be regularly performed on their translations. As recommended by the external auditors, all translation services have set a minimum target for the number of quality control checks per year in order to be better able to integrate such checks into their regular workload. While this may seem to be a modest step, it represents a considerable improvement over the situation previously obtaining. Once services have reduced their vacancy rates, the net capacity increase brought about by the creation of the new posts will be fully felt. An updated report on the situation will therefore be provided to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

99. Bidding exercises for institutional contractors for translation into Russian and Spanish will generate a considerable additional workload in 2008 for the two services concerned, which are responsible for evaluating the technical quality of the bids submitted. This additional workload will, unfortunately, coincide with the

[2] Such vacancies can only be filled sequentially (i.e., the P-4 posts must be filled first, creating, in turn, vacancies at the P-3 level, to be filled most likely through recruitment from the roster, which can easily take six months under the best of circumstances).

busiest period of processing pre-session documentation for the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. In addition, examinations for Chinese, English, French and Russian translators, scheduled for 2008, will absorb a considerable amount of capacity for the setting of examination papers and marking of examination scripts, thereby cutting into the capacity available for quality control.

100. In the context of integrated global management of conference services, the Department has developed a common roster for contractual translation, which is now being used by all duty stations on a trial basis. The common roster should serve both to increase the available contractual translation capacity and to improve coordination among duty stations in the use of contractual translation. The database of contractors can be searched according to such criteria as language and specialization, and contains information on quality controls of the contractor's work already performed at the various duty stations. As part of the project, a standardized electronic template for quality control evaluations has been developed.

C. Impact of freelance recruitment on quality of interpretation at all duty stations

United Nations Headquarters

101. The increasing number of meetings at New York Headquarters has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of freelance interpreters hired by the Interpretation Service. The number of interpreters available on the local and international markets is both limited and shrinking. The competition among international organizations as well as among duty stations is fierce and at times could lead to the recruitment of less-than-optimal quality interpreters solely to meet the demand.

102. In general, the Interpretation Service tries to make the quality and skill level of freelance interpreters the overriding consideration in their recruitment. To this end, the Service does its own evaluation of the performance of freelance interpreters, who are divided into four categories in descending level of quality. Preference is given to the interpreters in accordance with the category they are in. However, since the number is limited and the competition is strong, it happens at times that the interpreters in category I have other engagements at the time they are needed, which then forces the Service to resort to the lower categories. The considerations of economy and cost-effectiveness make it necessary for the Service to recruit local freelance interpreters and explore the possibility of workload sharing with other duty stations before considering the freelance interpreters available on the international market.

United Nations Office at Geneva

103. Although most freelance interpreters can perform up to the standard, there have been occasional quality issues. As many international organizations based in Geneva plan for and recruit freelancers one year ahead for their annual general conferences, they can pick and choose the best in the market. There is no way to compete with them. At the United Nations Office at Geneva, freelance recruitment often takes place as close to the start of the meeting as possible in an effort to hedge against last minute cancellations, which occur quite often. Moreover, emergency

sessions of the Human Rights Council also necessitate a desperate search for freelancers. As a result, quality suffers.

United Nations Office at Vienna

104. In Vienna, the ratio between permanent and freelance interpreters has consistently been 50:50 over the past years. With the addition of six new posts, it is hoped that a better ratio of 70:30 will be achieved. Freelance staff in some booths give a generally weaker performance than their permanent counterparts, especially in view of the complex legal, scientific and technical subjects in Vienna. The unpredictability of quality and availability in the freelance market add to concerns. Freelancers also have less adequate preparation time for the subject matters, cannot systematically take part in the in-house training provided to permanent staff, and show diminished motivation when not recruited regularly to service the meetings of particular bodies. Some freelance interpreters enter the market without adequate formal training and little self-training, and young graduates from interpretation schools who may have good potential but little exposure to United Nations subject matters cannot be expected to perform at the level of in-house staff. All these factors can have a negative impact on quality.

United Nations Office at Nairobi

105. The United Nations Office at Nairobi uses a high proportion of freelance interpreters given the small size of the team and the high vacancy rates prevalent in Nairobi. To ensure a high level of quality, it relies on interpreters affiliated to the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) and others with whom the Office has developed a satisfactory working relationship. It intends to maximize the use of inter-duty station loan mechanisms.

D. Current and future vacancies at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

106. As of June 2008, two of the four Arabic Interpreter posts in Nairobi were filled and it was hoped that two additional interpreters would be recruited from the list that had just been released of candidates who had passed the 2007 Arabic interpretation exam. However, the situation has been further complicated owing to the recent developments in Kenya which, unfortunately, had led to a great number of language staff actively seeking opportunities elsewhere. As the present report was being prepared, the overall vacancy rate for the interpretation section was 35 per cent.

107. The possibility of retaining and attracting good language staff at the Nairobi duty station would be greatly enhanced by making available posts at a higher level since, other than the Chief of the Translation and Editorial Section and the Chief Interpreter, and contrary to the situation at other duty stations, there are no other posts at the P-5 level in Nairobi in the language services. In addition, not all Translator/Reviser posts in Nairobi are funded from regular budget resources, thereby placing staff recruited against these extrabudgetary posts in a different contractual situation with respect to job security and duration of contract in relation to their colleagues in the three other duty stations. Recruitment and retention of staff against these much less desired extrabudgetary posts has proven to be an additional

complicating factor and conversion of these language posts from extrabudgetary to regular budget resources would greatly enhance the ability of the Office to attract and retain language staff.

108. In its continued efforts to seek a long-term solution to the problem of high vacancy rates in the language services in Nairobi, the United Nations Office at Nairobi has engaged the services of a consultant to explore the possibilities of providing enhanced training programmes to potential professional translators and interpreters on the African continent. This initiative has been taken in the context of the Working Group on Training of the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications, whose members, including the European Union, have given it wide support.

VII. Concluding observations

109. **In the concluding observations to the 2007 report of the Secretary-General on pattern of conferences (A/62/161 and Corr.1 and 2), the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management reasserted its full commitment to maximizing its contribution to the Organization's reform initiatives and intention to continue to improve the management of the resources made available to it by Member States. The Department also referred to a number of external factors beyond its control which continue to have a considerable impact on the efficient utilization of its resources, namely: (a) demographic transition owing to the retirement of language staff, the depletion of language resources and the imperative to replenish language rosters through more frequent international language competitive examinations; (b) implementation of the capital master plan; and (c) unpredictability of intergovernmental processes requiring the provision of services. Individually, those factors remain especially critical for the operation of the Department and its ability to provide the quality conference services requested by Member States. The impact of those factors will be compounded during the implementation of the capital master plan as a result of the scattering of the Department's resources over five locations. The continued smooth operation of the Department's critical conference services hardware and software systems will be vital to the functioning of all conference services throughout this period of major disruption.**

110. **In the period under review, considerable progress has been made in the management of conferences and in the pursuit of harmonization and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the use of conference services. As there are many parameters which are beyond the Department's control, the support and guidance of the General Assembly with regard to further improvement in this respect and the difficult challenge of recruiting and retaining quality language staff in all duty stations would be appreciated.**

Annex I

Meeting statistics of a core sample of United Nations bodies

A Number of meetings programmed by a given organ at a scheduled session

B Number of additional meetings held during the session

C Number of meetings cancelled during the session

D Number of meetings actually held

E Total number of reassignments

F Amount of time lost owing to late starting/early ending (hours and minutes rounded to the nearest five minutes, e.g. 5.25 = 5 hours and 25 minutes)

MR Meeting ratio, calculated as meetings held as a percentage of meetings available to a given body (D as a percentage of A)

PAF Planning accuracy factor, calculated as meetings planned, minus additional meetings, minus cancellations, all as a percentage of meetings planned (A minus B minus C as a percentage of A)

UF Utilization factor, the percentage of available conference resources actually used by the organ in question. The utilization factor is based on the following calculation:

$$\frac{(A+B) - (C-E) - (F/3)}{(A+B)} = UF$$

In the foregoing calculation, the number of minutes/hours lost as a result of late starting and early ending is converted into the equivalent of meetings lost by dividing the total by three, as the standard meeting time is three hours. The number of reassignments is subtracted from the number of cancelled meetings. The difference between the two and the number of meetings lost are then subtracted from the sum of meetings planned and additional meetings held. The result is expressed as a percentage of the sum of meetings planned and additional meetings held.

CI Issuance compliance index, calculated first as the percentage of pre-session documentation issued in accordance with the six-week rule and again as the percentage of documentation issued four weeks before the start of the session

AI Availability index, calculated as the actual rate of delivery presented on a week-by-week basis

N/A Not applicable

* Number of related reassignments

** Utilization factor that would result if only related reassignments were credited

The statistics are compiled in accordance with the methodology adopted by the Committee on Conferences at its 348th meeting, held on 18 May 1993.

A. New York

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board second regular session, 4-7 September 2007	6	1	0	7	0	N/A	0.25/0.15	117	83	97	N/A	40	16	34	11	7	0	2	3	0
6-8 September 2006	6	0	0	6	0	N/A	0.15/3.25	100	100	80	N/A	220	5	41	22	14	2	3	1	0
28-30 September 2005	6	0	1	5	0	N/A	0.30/1.20	83	83	73	N/A	110	0	79	0	79	11	11	4	4
General Assembly (Sixth Committee)																				
sixty-second session, 2007	33	2	3	32	3	N/A	3.20/3.55	97	85	93	N/A	435	12	12	0	0	0	1	0	0
sixty-first session, 2006	27	4	6	25	4	N/A	3.15/1.50	93	63	88	N/A	305	5	6	0	1	1	0	1	2
sixtieth session, 2005	32	1	4	29	4	N/A	5.20/8.20	91	84	86	N/A	820	44	55	0	11	11	0	22	11
Human Rights Committee																				
eighty-ninth session, 12-30 March 2007 (New York)	30	0	1	29	0	N/A	3.15/1.10	97	97	92	N/A	265	4	5	0	1	0	0	0	1
eighty-sixth session, 13-31 March 2006 (New York)	30	0	1	29	1	N/A	3.35/3.30	97	97	92	N/A	425	0	6	0	6	1	2	0	1
eighty-third session, 14 March-1 April 2005 (New York)	26	1	0	27	0	N/A	4.15/6.25	104	96	87	N/A	640	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
Committee on Conferences																				
10-14 September 2007	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	3.00/0.00	100	100	90	N/A	180	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
11-15 September 2006	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	2.45/1.35	100	100	86	N/A	260	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
19-27 September 2005	10	3	0	13	0	N/A	3.15/0.15	130	70	91	N/A	210	50	50	0	0	0	0	0	50

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Statistical Commission																				
thirty-eighth session, 27 February-2 March 2007	8	0	2	6	2	N/A	1.45/1.00	75	75	89	N/A	165	30	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
thirty-seventh session, 7-10 March 2006	8	0	0	8	0	N/A	0.35/5.35	100	100	74	N/A	370	31	31	1	0	0	0	0	0
thirty-sixth session, 1-4 March 2005	8	0	0	8	0	N/A	3.00/0.35	100	100	85	N/A	215	14	47	29	4	11	29	14	0
United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group on Arbitration																				
forty-sixth session, 5-9 February 2007	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	3.05/0.15	100	100	89	N/A	200	25	25	0	0	0	50	25	0
forty-fourth session, 23-27 January 2006	10	0	1	9	0	N/A	1.30/2.00	90	90	78	N/A	210	0	50	0	50	0	38	0	13
forty-second session, 10-14 January 2005	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	3.10/0.35	100	100	88	N/A	225	50	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund Executive Board second regular session,																				
10-14 September 2007	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	1.35/1.40	100	100	89	N/A	195	4	9	3	2	4	3	2	3
11-15 September 2006	10	0	4	6	3	N/A	1.20/0.45	60	60	83	N/A	125	2	19	4	13	8	7	12	13
6-9 September 2005	8	0	0	8	0	N/A	2.00/3.35	100	100	77	N/A	335	0	24	0	24	24	16	16	20
General Assembly (Fifth Committee)																				
resumed sixty-first session,																				
5-30 March 2007	40	2	5	37	5	5	10.25/4.40	93	83	88	88	905	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	10
7 May-8 June 2007	48	0	3	45	3	3	16.15/6.55	94	94	84	84	1 390	28	32	2	2	3	7	6	8

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
resumed sixtieth session, 6-31 March 2006	40	0	5	35	5	4	9.55/1.55	88	88	90	88	710	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	1
22 May-30 June 2006	57	0	7	50	7	7	15.05/9.25	88	88	86	86	1 470	37	44	6	1	2	1	0	10
resumed fifty-ninth session, 7 March-1 April 2005	37	31	26	42	26	0	10.15/2.45	114	54	94	55	780	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	71
2-27 May 2005	40	15	12	43	12	0	7.30/4.45	108	33	93	71	735	67	71	2	2	4	0	11	13
Commission on the Status of Women																				
fifty-first session, 26 February-9 March 2007	20	0	1	19	0	N/A	4.50/0.15	95	95	87	N/A	305	11	12	0	1	0	0	0	1
fiftieth session, 27 February-10 March 2006	20	0	0	20	0	N/A	5.15/1.50	100	100	88	N/A	425	12	16	2	2	0	0	2	0
forty-ninth session, 28 February-11 March 2005	21	2	0	23	0	N/A	4.05/1.00	110	90	93	N/A	305	0	15	0	15	31	23	0	31
General Assembly (Fifth Committee)																				
sixty-second session, 2007	103	4	9	98	8	8	24.30/13.45	95	87	87	87	2 270	51	54	0	3	2	3	6	24
sixty-first session, 2006	116	2	22	96	18	10	23.25/9.50	83	79	87	80	1 995	26	40	5	9	3	7	15	18
sixtieth session, 2005	112	48	21	139	19	12	17.40/18.20	124	38	91	87	2 160	34	49	7	8	3	11	16	21
UNICEF Executive Board, annual session, 4-8 June 2007	10	1	2	9	1	N/A	0.15/1.15	90	70	86	N/A	90	0	0	9	7	4	9	2	2
5-9 June 2006	10	0	1	9	0	N/A	0.20/5.50	90	90	69	N/A	370	13	24	3	8	7	4	2	0
6-10 June 2005	10	0	0	10	0	N/A	2.20/4.00	100	100	79	N/A	380	0	93	0	93	4	4	0	0

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
UNICEF Executive Board, first regular session, 15-18 January 2007	6	2	0	8	0	N/A	0.30/2.50	133	67	86	N/A	200	2	3	1	0	3	0	1	1
16-19 January 2006	8	0	1	7	1	N/A	0.20/4.30	88	88	81	N/A	270	1	7	4	2	1	1	0	0
17-19 January 2005	6	0	0	6	0	N/A	1.40/1.35	100	100	82	N/A	195	0	50	0	50	0	0	25	25
General Assembly (First Committee)																				
sixty-second session, 2007	24	1	0	25	0	0	5.35/5.55	104	96	85	85	690	24	25	0	1	1	3	6	11
sixty-first session, 2006	26	0	4	22	2	1	2.00/5.35	85	85	84	80	410	23	25	2	0	1	0	0	14
sixtieth session, 2005	27	1	4	24	3	0	1.45/11.55	89	81	80	69	820	58	64	3	3	6	3	3	25
United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund Executive Board first regular session, 22-26 January 2007	8	0	0	8	0	N/A	1.35/2.30	100	100	83	N/A	245	5	9	2	2	1	0	5	5
24-27 January 2006	8	0	0	8	0	N/A	2.25/	100	100	90	N/A	145	4	13	5	4	0	1	2	1
24-28 January 2005	8	0	0	8	0	N/A	3.40/2.50	100	100	73	N/A	390	0	45	0	45	4	4	14	32
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions																				
15 May-27 June 2007	102	0	5	97	1	N/A	9.15/37.20	95	95	81	N/A	2 795								
2 May-30 June 2006	85	0	8	77	2	N/A	5.50/28.30	91	91	79	N/A	2 060								
17 May-15 July 2005	83	0	3	80	2	N/A	6.50/9.30	96	96	92	N/A	980								
Committee on Information																				
twenty-ninth session, 30 April-11 May 2007	9	0	0	9	0	N/A	0.20/5.10	100	100	80	N/A	330	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
twenty-eighth session, 24 April-5 May 2006	11	0	2	9	1	N/A	2.00/12.30	82	82	47	N/A	870	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
twenty-seventh session, 18-29 April 2005	9	0	2	7	1	N/A	4.00/3.45	78	78	60	N/A	465	66	100	17	17	0	0	0	0

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions																				
6 February-27 April 2007	113	0	14	99	2	N/A	10.05/21.55	88	88	80	N/A	1 920								
14 February-13 April 2006	86	0	8	78	1	N/A	3.20/23.40	91	91	81	N/A	1 620								
1 February-22 April 2005	79	0	4	75	0	N/A	6.35/10.15	10	95	88	N/A	1 010								
Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions																				
4 September-21 December 2007	151	0	21	130	11	N/A	13.15/55.10	86	86	78	N/A	4 105								
5 September-22 December 2006	153	0	24	129	7	N/A	7.55/46.3	84	84	77	N/A	3 265								
29 August-23 December 2005	151	0	27	124	18	N/A	4.45/48.55	82	82	82	N/A	3 220								
General Assembly																				
sixty-second session, plenary 2007	137	3	52	88	36	18	13.10/32.45	64	60	78	65	2 755	25	32	6	1	3	4	3	2
sixty-first session, plenary 2006	148	0	57	91	41	10	19.20/25.30	61	61	79	58	2 690	29	39	6	4	3	5	0	2
sixtieth session, plenary 2005	129	5	77	57	64	0	11.40/30.35	44	36	80	32	2 535	50	71	8	13	11	6	4	6
Commission on Social Development																				
forty-fifth session, 7-16 February 2007	16	0	3	13	2	0	3.00/5.30	81	81	76	64	510	6	7	0	1	0	0	0	0
forty-fourth session, 8-17 February 2006	15	0	1	14	1	0	4.20/6.05	93	93	77	70	625	23	25	1	1	0	0	0	0
forty-third session, 9-18 February 2005	19	0	2	17	2	0	4.05/7.00	89	89	81	70	665	14	71	0	57	0	0	14	14
General Assembly (Second Committee)																				
sixty-second session, 2007	38	1	7	32	5	0	6.25/17.10	84	79	75	62	1 415	13	21	5	3	5	1	2	0
sixty-first session, 2006	43	3	5	41	1	0	6.45/15.30	95	81	75	73	1 345	15	25	6	4	0	1	0	0
sixtieth session, 2005	51	5	10	46	5	0	8.00/15.45	90	71	77	68	1 425	57	86	11	18	11	0	0	4

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
General Assembly (Third Committee)																				
sixty-second session, 2007	62	1	8	55	2	0	14.05/14.50	89	85	75	72	1 735	37	49	8	4	7	1	4	3
sixty-first session, 2006	57	9	11	55	5	0	15.25/19.10	96	65	73	66	2 075	11	19	2	6	4	6	7	23
sixtieth session, 2005	65	0	15	50	10	1	9.45/20.15	77	77	77	63	1 800	24	47	11	12	11	14	18	10
Committee for Programme and Coordination																				
forty-seventh session, 11 June-6 July 2007	38	4	9	33	4	N/A	7.15/12.15	87	66	73	N/A	1 170	6	0	0	2	1	1	2	12
forty-sixth session, 14 August-8 September 2006	38	3	2	39	2	N/A	12.05/7.05	103	87	84	N/A	1 150	25	32	5	2	2	1	2	2
forty-fifth session, 6 June-1 July 2005	40	4	4	40	4	N/A	9.35/8.10	100	80	87	N/A	1 065	25	47	14	8	14	14	4	22
General Assembly (Fourth Committee)																				
sixty-second session, 2007	29	0	4	25	2	N/A	5.10/12.50	86	86	72	N/A	1 080	16	17	1	0	0	2	0	0
sixty-first session, 2006	26	2	2	26	1	N/A	6.15/18.25	100	85	67	N/A	1 135	8	15	3	4	2	0	0	1
sixtieth session, 2005	27	1	3	25	3	N/A	5.10/14.10	93	85	77	N/A	1 160	65	71	6	0	6	6	6	12
Committee on Contributions																				
sixty-seventh session, 11-29 June 2007	24	0	5	19	4	N/A	8.45/8.45	79	79	72	N/A	1 050	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
sixty-sixth session, 5-30 June 2006	33	0	10	23	3	N/A	7.00/2.30	70	70	69	N/A	570	7	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
sixty-fifth session, 6-24 June 2005	22	0	5	17	3	N/A	4.40/7.15	77	77	73	N/A	715	0	0	0	0	17	0	17	67
Commission on Sustainable Development																				
fifteenth session, 30 April-11 May 2007	33	7	6	34	0	N/A	10.20/7.10	103	61	70	N/A	1 050	3	9	5	1	0	0	0	0
fourteenth session, 1-12 May 2006	39	5	8	36	7	N/A	3.55/1.35	92	67	94	N/A	330	23	25	1	1	0	0	0	0
thirteenth session, 11-22 April 2005	38	5	14	29	7	N/A	16.50/4.45	76	50	67	N/A	1 295	0	14	0	14	43	0	43	0

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Economic and Social Council, resumed organizational session																				
25-26 April 2007	4	0	2	2	1	0	0.25/0.15	50	50	69	44	40	34	39	2	3	4	7	9	5
10-11 May 2006	4	0	1	3	0	0	0.55/2.00	75	75	51	51	175	15	16	1	0	0	1	0	0
27-28 April 2005	4	0	2	2	0	0	0.55/3.45	50	50	11	11	280	86	100	14	0	0	0	0	0
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group																				
26 February-16 March 2007	26	2	6	22	4	N/A	12.10/7.40	85	69	69	N/A	1 190	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
27 February-17 March 2006	24	1	1	24	0	N/A	7.25/4.25	100	92	80	N/A	710								
31 January-25 February 2005	33	0	3	30	2	N/A	13.55/15.40	91	91	67	N/A	1 775								
Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations																				
22 January-2 February and 14-18 May 2007	30	0	8	22	1	N/A	6.40/4.20	73	73	66	N/A	560	0	23	16	7	6	12	3	0
19-27 January and 10-19 May 2006	30	0	3	27	3	N/A	8.15/4.20	90	90	86	N/A	755	0	12	6	6	0	4	3	9
5-18 January and 9-20 May 2005	36	7	6	37	3	N/A	13.30/1.45	103	64	81	N/A	915	7	30	19	4	13	14	42	0
Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization																				
7-16 February 2007	9	2	3	8	1	N/A	2.20/3.30	89	44	64	N/A	350								
3-13 April 2006	9	0	3	6	3	N/A	1.40/2.20	67	67	85	N/A	240								
14-21 March 2005	11	0	5	6	3	N/A	1.20/3.30	55	55	67	N/A	290								
Commission on Population and Development																				
fortieth session, 9-13 April 2007	10	0	4	6	1	0	1.15/2.00	60	60	59	49	195	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
thirty-ninth session, 3-7 April 2006	10	0	1	9	0	0	3.45/0.30	90	90	76	76	255	7	8	1	0	0	0	0	0

	A	B	C	D	E	*	F	MR	PAF	UF	**	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
thirty-eighth session, 4-8 April 2005	10	0	2	8	2	0	5.00/2.10	80	80	76	56	430	45	99	45	9	0	0	0	0
Committee for Programme and Coordination, organizational session,																				
1 May 2007	1	0	0	1	0	N/A	0.20/1.20	100	100	44	N/A	100	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 June 2006	1	0	0	1	0	N/A	0.10/0.30	100	100	78	N/A	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
11 May 2005	1	0	0	1	0	N/A	0.20/0.00	100	100	89	N/A	20	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic and Social Council organizational session,																				
6-9 February 2007	5	3	4	4	1	0	1.35/3.35	80	-40	41	28	310	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
7 February 2006	4	0	3	1	2	0	0.15/1.35	25	25	60	10	110	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
1-4 February 2005	4	2	3	3	0	0	0.35/1.30	75	-25	38	38	125	0	25	0	25	0	75	0	25

B. Geneva

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Economic and Social Council Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods																		
3-12 December 2007	10	0	0	10	0	0.25/0.30	100	100	97	55	100	101	1	0	0	0	10	13
4-12 December 2006	10	0	0	10	0	0.40/1.05	100	100	94	105	15	15	0	0	0	2	0	83
28 November-7 December 2005	15	0	2	13	0	0.20/2.25	87	87	81	165	44	56	9	3	15	21	9	0
Committee on the Rights of the Child																		
forty-fourth session, 15 January-2 February 2007	30	0	0	30	0	3.20/1.30	100	100	95	290	60	65	4	1	1	0	2	1
forty-first session, 9-27 January 2006	41	0	2	39	0	3.30/3.15	95	95	90	405	50	50	0	0	4	0	0	0
thirty-eighth session, 10-28 January 2005	30	0	2	28	0	1.55/1.35	93	93	89	210	63	89	13	13	6	0	0	0
International Law Commission																		
fifty-ninth session (first part), 7 May-5 June 2007	30	0	0	30	0	2.45/1.40	100	100	95	265	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
fifty-eighth session (first part), 1 May-9 June 2006	44	0	0	44	0	0.50/2.20	100	100	98	190	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60
fifty-seventh session (first part), 2 May-3 June 2005	35	0	0	35	0	1.05/5.20	100	100	94	385	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Law Commission																		
fifty-ninth session (second part), 9 July-10 August 2007	38	0	0	38	0	2.50/3.30	100	94	94	380	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
fifty-eighth session (second part), 7 July-8 August 2006	42	0	0	42	0	1.20/2.25	100	100	97	225	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
fifty-seventh session (second part), 11 July-5 August 2005	31	0	0	31	0	2.25/2.00	100	100	95	265	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights																		
thirty-eighth session, 30 April-18 May 2007	28	0	1	27	0	3.30/0.25	96	96	92	235	33	34	0	1	0	0	1	3
thirty-sixth session, 1-19 May 2006	30	0	1	29	0	5.05/0.55	97	97	90	360	48	61	0	13	4	0	4	0
thirty-fourth session, 25 April-13 May 2005	28	0	1	27	0	6.55/3.45	96	96	84	640	86	86	0	0	0	0	0	0
Committee against Torture																		
thirty-ninth session, 5-23 November 2007	30	0	1	29	0	4.25/0.55	97	97	91	320	34	34	0	0	0	4	0	2
thirty-seventh session, 6-24 November 2006	30	0	1	29	0	3.45/1.40	97	97	91	325	26	34	4	4	0	4	43	4
thirty-fifth session, 15-26 November 2005	30	0	0	30	0	6.30/4.05	100	100	88	635	43	46	3	0	7	10	13	13
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination																		
Seventy-first session, 30 July-17 August 2007	28	0	0	28	0	7.30/0.05	100	100	91	455	39	44	1	4	3	1	3	1
sixty-ninth session, 31 July-18 August 2006	28	0	1	27	0	7.05/0.10	96	96	88	435	36	39	3	0	11	0	8	22
sixty-seventh session, 2-19 August 2005	28	0	0	28	0	6.40/0.25	100	100	92	425	35	38	0	3	3	0	0	51
Committee on the Rights of the Child																		
forty-fifth session, 21 May-8 June 2007	28	0	1	27	0	3.30/1.45	96	96	90	315	58	59	0	1	1	0	8	1
forty-second session, 15 May-2 June 2006	42	0	0	42	0	3.10/7.35	100	100	91	645	54	61	7	0	7	2	20	2
thirty-ninth session, 17 May-3 June 2005	28	0	1	27	0	1.45/1.20	100	100	93	185	50	50	0	0	8	17	8	0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Human Rights Committee																		
ninetieth session, 9-27 July 2007	30	0	1	29	0	3.10/2.55	97	97	90	365	31	32	1	0	1	0	3	1
eighty-seventh session, 10-28 July 2006	30	0	1	29	0	2.55/3.50	97	97	89	405	20	33	0	13	27	7	7	13
eighty-fourth session, 11-29 July 2005	29	0	0	29	0	5.55/1.15	100	100	92	430	25	45	6	14	11	31	3	6
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights																		
thirty-ninth session, 5-23 November 2007	30	0	1	29	0	6.25/0.20	97	97	89	405	21	21	0	0	0	2	1	4
thirty-seventh session, 6-24 November 2006	30	0	1	29	0	4.50/0.20	97	97	91	310	47	65	0	18	12	6	0	0
thirty-fifth session, 7-25 November 2005	30	0	1	29	0	4.00/0.20	97	97	92	260	42	42	0	0	17	8	17	0
Committee on the Rights of the Child																		
forty-sixth session, 17 September-5 October 2007	34	0	1	33	0	3.15/5.10	97	97	89	505	63	64	0	1	2	1	2	3
forty-third session, 11-29 September 2006	46	0	1	45	0	3.55/9.30	98	98	88	805	56	56	0	0	0	2	2	14
fortieth session, 12-30 September 2005	31	0	2	29	0	1.55/3.00	94	94	88	295	64	71	0	7	0	0	7	14
Human Rights Committee																		
ninety-first session, 15 October-2 November 2007	30	0	1	29	0	4.00/3.20	97	97	89	440	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
eighty-eighth session, 16 October-3 November 2006	28	0	1	27	0	2.00/2.30	96	96	91	270	18	36	9	9	27	0	0	0
eighty-fifth session, 17 October-3 November 2005	28	0	1	27	0	3.45/3.05	96	96	88	410	33	46	0	13	7	20	20	0
Committee against Torture																		
thirty-eighth session, 30 April-18 May 2007	28	0	0	28	0	5.25/5.55	100	100	87	680	32	33	1	0	0	2	5	5

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
thirty-sixth session, 1-19 May 2006	30	0	1	29	0	5.05/0.55	97	97	90	360	64	73	0	9	5	0	0	0
thirty-fourth session, 2-20 May 2005	26	0	0	26	0	3.15/0.50	100	100	95	245	42	47	5	0	0	16	32	0
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination																		
seventieth session, 19 February-9 March 2007	30	0	1	29	0	8.35/0.10	97	97	87	525	63	65	0	2	1	0	0	1
sixty-eighth session, 20 February-10 March 2006	30	0	0	30	0	6.45/1.30	100	100	91	495	20	40	20	0	0	0	40	0
sixty-sixth session, 21 February-11 March 2005	30	0	0	30	0	6.15/2.00	100	100	91	495	68	68	0	0	5	5	11	5
Economic and Social Council																		
Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods																		
2-6 July 2007	10	0	1	9	0	1.00/0.10	90	90	86	70	97	108	2	9	2	4	0	12
3-12 July 2006	15	0	1	14	0	1.00/1.15	93	93	88	135	20	27	0	7	0	6	67	0
4-8 July 2005	10	0	1	9	0	0.00/1.30	90	90	85	90	36	88	36	16	8	4	0	0
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Trade and Development Board																		
fifty-fourth session, 1-11 October 2007	18	9	9	18	6	6.20/1.30	100	0	79	470	71	74	3	0	2	2	2	3
fifty-third session, 27 September-2 October 2006	8	0	0	8	0	2.40/2.20	100	100	79	300	0	17	0	17	0	8	25	17
fifty-second session, 4-14 October 2005	20	0	0	20	0	8.15/2.40	100	100	82	655	40	60	10	10	0	10	20	0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees																		
fifty-eighth session, 1-5 October 2007	10	0	1	9	0	2.50/1.45	90	90	75	275	23	23	0	0	2	1	0	4
fifty-seventh session, 2-6 October 2006	10	0	2	8	0	2.00/1.35	80	80	68	215	6	6	0	0	0	0	38	0
fifty-sixth session, 3-7 October 2005	10	0	1	9	0	0.55/1.10	90	90	83	125	47	52	5	0	0	5	11	26
Economic and Social Council, substantive session, 2-27 July 2007 (Geneva)	55	5	6	54	0	12.20/16.45	98	80	74	1 745	0	3	0	3	6	12	12	16
3-28 July 2006 (Geneva)	50	9	4	55	0	9.35/13.30	107	91	80	1 385	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	27
29 June-27 July 2005 (New York)	43	0	6	37	2	8.10/14.40	86	86	73	1 370	35	50	3	12	8	11	14	17
Human Rights Council,[a] sixth session, 10-28 September 2007	30	0	1	29	0	9.05/6.40	97	97	79	945	0	1	0	1	2	1	3	31
fifth session, 11-18 June 2007	13	4	3	14	0	5.35/3.15	108	46	65	530	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	11
fourth session, 12-30 March 2007	30	3	0	33	0	4.30/7.05	110	90	88	695	1	9	6	2	8	5	3	86
third session, 29 November-8 December 2006	18	0	0	18	0	3.15/2.50	100	100	89	365	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
second session, 18 September-6 October 2006	30	2	0	32	0	11.15/6.10	107	93	82	1 045	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
first session, 19-30 June 2006	22	4	0	26	0	5.20/8.30	118	82	82	830	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Human Rights Council Advisory Committee[b]																		
2007	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
2006	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
2005	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
Human Rights Council, Expert Mechanism on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples[c]																		
2007	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
2006	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
2005	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								

C. Vienna

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
International Narcotics Control Board																		
eighty-ninth session, 7-18 May 2007	20	0	0	20	0	0.00/0.00	100	100	100	0	6	6	0	0	13	19	16	10
eighty-sixth session, 8-19 May 2006	20	0	0	20	0	0.50/0.00	100	100	100	48	0	6	0	6	6	22	22	0
eighty-third session, 2-13 May 2005	20	0	0	20	0	0.35/0.00	100	100	100	34	0	0	0	0	16	26	10	3
International Narcotics Control Board																		
ninetieth session, 30 October-16 November 2007	28	0	0	28	0	0.05/1.00	100	100	99	65	6	10	2	2	12	6	16	4
eighty-seventh session, 30 October-16 November 2006	28	0	0	28	0	0.25/0.35	100	100	99	60	8	8	0	0	7	13	13	7
eighty-fourth session, 1-18 November 2005	26	0	0	26	0	0.50/0.00	100	100	99	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space																		
fiftieth session, 6-15 June 2007	17	0	0	17	0	2.10/1.40	100	100	92	230	16	21	0	5	14	21	0	0
forty-ninth session, 7-16 June 2006	16	0	0	16	0	2.20/5.40	100	100	81	477	14	14	0	0	14	43	0	29
forty-eighth session, 8-17 June 2005	16	2	0	18	2	3.30/4.05	113	88	86	455	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	25
United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group on Arbitration																		
forty-seventh session, 10-14 September 2007	10	0	0	10	0	2.35/0.00	100	100	91	155	33	33	0	0	0	0	67	0
forty-fifth session, 11-15 September 2006	10	0	0	10	0	2.45/1.25	100	100	90	250	0	78	0	78	11	11	0	0
forty-third session, 3-7 October 2005	10	0	0	10	0	2.05/0.10	100	100	93	135	58	58	0	0	19	0	0	3

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Committee of the Whole																		
fiftieth session, 12-16 March 2007	18	2	0	20	0	3.00/2.30	100	89	91	330	6	30	11	13	22	15	7	23
forty-ninth session, 13-17 March 2006	18	3	0	21	0	5.45/7.35	100	83	81	797	25	67	15	27	13	18	2	0
forty-eighth session, 7-11 March 2005	18	0	0	18	0	9.15/2.10	100	100	79	685	13	38	9	16	26	18	6	6
United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation																		
fifty-fifth session, 21-25 May 2007	10	0	1	9	0	0.15/0.05	90	90	89	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
fifty-fourth session, 29 May-2 June 2006	10	0	0	10	0	0.20/3.10	100	100	90	208	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
fifty-third session, 26-30 September 2005	10	0	0	10	0	0.15/2.30	100	100	91	165	60	80	0	20	0	20	0	0
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice																		
sixteenth session, 23-27 April 2007	19	1	0	20	0	5.35/1.35	105	95	88	430	24	47	3	19	13	7	22	13
fifteenth session, 24-28 April 2006	19	3	0	22	0	5.45/7.45	100	84	77	810	32	69	13	24	18	13	0	0
fourteenth session, 23-27 May 2005	19	0	0	19	0	2.30/2.15	100	100	92	285	5	30	14	11	24	4	20	14
UNCITRAL																		
fortieth session, 25 June-12 July 2007	20	0	0	20	0	3.05/3.50	100	100	88	415	10	38	3	25	9	6	11	12
thirty-ninth session, 19 June-7 July 2006 (New York)	28	0	5	23	1	5.20/3.50	82	82	75	550	19	38	2	17	9	13	2	25
thirty-eighth session, 4-15 July 2005	20	0	1	18	0	3.45/1.40	90	95	86	325	27	45	9	9	23	11	13	6
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Scientific and Technical Subcommittee																		
forty-fourth session, 12-23 February 2007	20	0	0	20	0	2.30/10.00	100	100	79	750	0	0	0	0	26	13	7	20

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
forty-third session, 20 February-3 March 2006	20	0	0	20	0	3.25/11.35	100	100	75	902	7	33	13	13	0	0	20	33
forty-second session, 21 February-4 March 2005	20	0	0	20	0	3.50/5.10	100	100	85	540	5	10	0	5	28	10	10	10
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Legal Subcommittee																		
forty-sixth session, 26 March-5 April 2007	18	0	1	17	0	1.50/8.25	94	94	75	615	0	10	0	10	0	20	30	37
forty-fifth session, 3-13 April 2006	18	0	1	17	0	2.45/9.20	94	94	72	726	22	44	11	11	11	11	0	19
forty-fourth session, 4-15 April 2005	20	0	0	20	0	7.05/12.10	100	100	68	1 155	8	41	8	25	16	8	0	8
UNCITRAL Working Group on Electronic Commerce[d]																		
2007	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
2006	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								
2005	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—								

D. Nairobi

	A	B	C	D	E	F	MR	PAF	UF	Minutes	CI 6 weeks	CI 4 weeks	AI Issued by end of week 6	5	4	3	2	1
Committee of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)																		
2007	4	0	0	4	0	0	100	100	100	0	N/A							
2006	5	0	0	5	0	0	100	100	100	0	N/A							
2005	4	0	0	4	0	0	100	100	100	0	N/A							
Committee of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme																		
2007	4	0	0	4	0	0	100	100	100	0	N/A							
2006	4	0	0	4	0	0	100	100	100	0	N/A							
2005	3	0	0	3	0	0	100	100	100	0	N/A							
UNEP Governing Council																		
twenty-fourth session, 5-9 February 2007	20	0	1	19	0	0	95	95	95	0	24	65	6	35	12	12	12	0
ninth special session, 7-9 February 2006	12	1	0	13	0	0	108	92	100	0	40	47	7	0	23	20	13	0
twenty-third session, 21-25 February 2005	20	0	1	19	0	1.05	95	95	93	65	76	93	17	0	0	0	7	0

[a] The Human Rights Council was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/251 and replaced the Commission on Human Rights.

[b] The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee was established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 5/1 and subsequently replaced the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The first session of the Committee is scheduled to be held in Geneva from 4 to 15 August 2008.

[c] The Expert Mechanism on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples was established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 6/36 and subsequently replaced the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The meeting dates are yet to be determined.

[d] The UNCITRAL Working Group on Electronic Commerce did not hold meetings in 2005, 2006 and 2007. The forty-fifth session is scheduled to be held from 28 to 31 October 2008.

Annex II

Statistics on the provision of conference services in 2007 for bodies entitled to meet "as required" in New York

	Meetings with interpretation services			*Meetings without interpretation services*	
Grouping	*Requested*	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
Committee on Conferences	2	2	0	0	0
Committee on Relations with the Host Country	5	4	1	2	2
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	9	8	1	0	0
Economic and Social Council (informal consultations)	34	24	10	82	82
Peacebuilding Commission	76	62	14	21	21
Security Council Sanctions Committees	195	185	10	2	2
Security Council — other subsidiary bodies	98	87	11	195	195
Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group	3	2	1	13	13
United Nations Children's Fund, Executive Board (informal meetings)	14	11	3	8	8
United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Population Fund, Executive Board (informal meetings)	31	26	5	24	24
Total	**467**	**411**	**56**	**347**	**347**

Annex III

Statistics on the provision of conference services in 2007 for meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi

	Meetings with interpretation services			*Meetings without interpretation services*	
Grouping	*Requested*	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
New York					
African Group	3	2	1	24	24
African Union	16	15	1	68	68
Alliance of Small Island States	8	7	1	16	16
Arab Group	3	3	0	4	4
Asian Group	14	13	1	0	0
Association of Southeast Asian Nations	0	0	0	8	8
Caribbean Community	0	0	0	3	3
Eastern European Group	0	0	0	25	25
Economic Community of Central African States	0	0	0	1	1
Economic Community of West African States	0	0	0	1	1
European Union	0	0	0	36	36
Forum of Small States	0	0	0	1	1
Group of 15	1	1	0	0	0
Group of 77	25	22	3	464	464
Group of 77 on Fifth Committee Matters	42	37	5	54	54
Group of Landlocked and Developing Countries	3	2	1	2	2
Group of the Least Developed Countries	17	14	3	1	1
GUAM (Gambia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova Group)	0	0	0	1	1
Gulf Cooperation Council	6	6	0	1	1
JUSCANZ (Japan, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand)	0	0	0	56	56
Latin American and Caribbean Group	24	19	5	3	3
League of Arab States	6	5	1	18	18
Non-Aligned Movement	18	16	2	55	55
Open-ended Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77	1	1	0	0	0
Organization of the Islamic Conference	15	13	2	23	23
Rio Group	3	3	0	8	8
Southern African Development Community	0	0	0	6	6
Western European and Other States Group	14	12	2	2	2
Subtotal	**219**	**191**	**28**	**881**	**881**

Grouping	Meetings with interpretation services			Meetings without interpretation services	
	Requested	Provided	Not provided	Requested	Provided
Geneva					
African Group	0	0	0	152	132
African Union	0	0	0	30	26
Alliance of Small Island States	0	0	0	35	35
Asian Group	0	0	0	91	73
Eastern European Group	0	0	0	54	47
European Union	0	0	0	170	132
Group of 15	0	0	0	5	4
Group of 21	28	24	4	1	1
Group of 77 and China	12	9	3	179	124
Latin American and Caribbean Group	15	10	5	101	88
JUSCANZ (Japan, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand)	0	0	0	23	21
League of Arab States	0	0	0	9	8
Least developed countries	3	0	3	22	22
Non-Aligned Movement	22	15	7	37	29
Organization of the Islamic Conference	9	7	2	90	67
Western European and Other States Group	0	0	0	87	79
Subtotal	**89**	**65**	**24**	**1 086**	**888**
Vienna					
African Group	0	0	0	52	52
Arab Group	0	0	0	4	4
Asian Group	0	0	0	24	24
Eastern European Group/Group D	0	0	0	2	2
European Union	0	0	0	52	52
Group of 77	0	0	0	50	50
Group of Eight	0	0	0	3	3
Latin American and Caribbean Group	0	0	0	60	60
Non-Aligned Movement	0	0	0	1	1
Other regional groups	0	0	0	10	10
Western European and Other States Group	0	0	0	1	1
Subtotal	**0**	**0**	**0**	**259**	**259**
Nairobi					
African Group	9	9	0	38	38
Arab Group	0	0	0	21	21
Asia and Pacific Group	0	0	0	18	18
Central and Eastern European States Group	0	0	0	15	15
European Union	0	0	0	39	39
Group of 77 and China	0	0	0	26	26

Grouping	Meetings with interpretation services			Meetings without interpretation services	
	Requested	*Provided*	*Not provided*	*Requested*	*Provided*
JUSCANZ (Japan, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand)	0	0	0	13	13
Latin American and Caribbean Group	1	1	0	21	21
Western European and Other States Group	0	0	0	12	12
Subtotal	**10**	**10**	**0**	**203**	**203**
Total 2007	**314**	**266**	**48**	**2 498**	**2 296**
Total 2006	**360**	**276**	**79**	**2 685**	**2 495**
Total 2005	**325**	**283**	**53**	**2 405**	**2 334**

Annex IV

Requests for meetings during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly and statistical information

A. Requests for meetings

1. Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 13 June 2008 from the Secretary of the Committee

As in previous years, I hereby submit a request that the Committee on Relations with the Host Country be permitted to meet at Headquarters during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

This request is based on the Committee's mandate, set out in General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI) of 15 December 1971, authorizing the Committee to meet periodically during the year or whenever the need arises. The Committee, since its establishment in 1971, has always met during the regular sessions of the General Assembly in order to consider, among other things, problems experienced by delegations of Member States, to finalize its annual report and to present it to the General Assembly.

Pursuant to its resolution 62/72 of 6 December 2007, the Assembly affirmed the importance of the Committee being in a position to fulfil its mandate and meet on short notice to deal with urgent and important matters concerning the relations between the United Nations and the host country and, in that connection, requested the Secretariat and the Committee on Conferences to accord priority to requests from the Committee on Relations with the Host Country for conference-servicing facilities for meetings of that Committee that must be held while the General Assembly and its Main Committees are meeting, without prejudice to the requirements of those bodies and on an "as available" basis. The Assembly also requested the Committee to continue its work in conformity with General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI) and to submit a report on its work to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. Having due regard to the nature of the Committee, its work and previous experience, it would suffice to make the necessary conference facilities available for two or three meetings only.

2. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Letter dated 6 May 2008 from the Chairman of the Committee

As you are aware, the General Assembly, by its resolution 62/80 of 10 December 2007, has again requested the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate. By the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

As the Committee has no control over the timing of the events it is called upon to discuss, it needs to meet throughout the year, as circumstances require. Based on past experience, the Committee would request facilities for approximately three

meetings per General Assembly session. These are in addition to the solemn meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is included in each year's calendar.

With regard to the documentation submitted to the General Assembly, please be advised that the Committee submits its annual report (supplement No. 35) under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine". The Committee usually adopts its report in early October of each year, at which point it is submitted for processing.

In light of the above, I should like to request that authorization again be granted to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to hold meetings during the forthcoming sixty-third session of the General Assembly, as necessary for carrying out the important mandate entrusted to the Committee by the Assembly.

3. Disarmament Commission

Memorandum dated 13 May 2008 from the Secretary of the Commission

We would be most grateful if you would, in accordance with the exception to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, seek the approval of the Committee on Conferences for the United Nations Disarmament Commission to meet for an organizational session on Tuesday, 4 November 2008.

The organizational session of the Commission, during the General Assembly, is justified by reasons of political practicality and reasons of membership. Both the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission are concerned with the same disarmament agenda and participating Member States are represented by the same delegations, almost half of which come from the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament.

The presence of disarmament ambassadors during the work of the First Committee presents a unique opportunity to discuss and solve not only organizational but also substantive issues, which require an intricate knowledge of international disarmament machinery as well as of substance.

And, of course, the holding of an organizational session — one afternoon meeting — requires limited conference-servicing resources.

4. Executive Board of the United Nations Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Memorandum dated 18 June 2008 from the Officer-in-Charge of the Executive Board

The Executive Board of INSTRAW held a resumed fifth session at United Nations Headquarters on 22 May 2008. At this session, the Executive Board determined the need to hold a second resumed session in October in order to review the progress made in the recruitment of a new Director for the Institute.

In this regard, we would be most grateful if you would, in accordance with the exception to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 42/243, seek the approval of the Committee for the Executive Board of INSTRAW to meet in a resumed fifth session on 2 and 3 October 2008, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. each day.

5. Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Memorandum dated 20 May 2008 from the Executive Secretary of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

In its resolution 60/248, the General Assembly decided to establish the Independent Audit Advisory Committee as a subsidiary body to assist the Assembly in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities.

According to its terms of reference (see General Assembly resolution 61/275, annex), the Advisory Committee shall meet up to four times a year, in coordination with the relevant activities of the United Nations and the Assembly and in accordance with Assembly resolutions on the pattern of conferences.

During 2008, the Advisory Committee has already met twice in New York. In order to complete its work programme for the year and to ensure that it provides timely advice to the General Assembly, the Committee is planning to hold two more sessions this year, one in July and the final session from 1 to 3 December. At the December session, the Committee plans to discuss, inter alia, the regular budget proposals of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the biennium 2010-2011. The OIOS submissions would not be available to the Committee before December. The Committee is required to examine the OIOS budget proposals and to provide its comments to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in sufficient lead time prior to the review of the OIOS budget proposals by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

In the circumstances, I am requesting that the Independent Audit Advisory Committee be granted a waiver to hold its last session from 1 to 3 December 2008, in line with General Assembly resolution 40/243. The granting of this waiver would enable the Advisory Committee to complete its programme of work for 2008.

6. Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Memorandum dated 28 May 2008 from the Secretary of the Executive Board

We would be most grateful if you would, in accordance with the exception to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243, seek the approval of the Committee on Conferences for the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to meet from 15 to 19 September 2008.

As is usual practice, UNICEF holds three Executive Board sessions per year as follows: (a) first regular session (January); (b) annual session (June); and second regular session (September). We also have to bear in mind the scheduling of the sessions of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund.

In view of the dates of the annual session and to ensure sufficient time for the preparation, translation and distribution of the documents, our second regular session has been scheduled for September — and not later in the year — owing to the General Assembly. While deciding on the timing, we have also taken into consideration other meetings scheduled this year for September.

7. Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Memorandum dated 12 June 2008 from the Secretary of the Working Group

In paragraph 3 of its resolution 62/104, regarding the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide the necessary services and assistance to the Working Group for the conduct of its work to ensure the financial security of the Agency.

In order to fulfil its mandate, the Working Group needs the latest data with regard to the UNRWA budget, that is, up-to-date information on the current budget and precise indications as to the needed revenue and the anticipated contributions for the next fiscal year. Owing to its budgetary procedure, UNRWA is not in a position to supply the Working Group with this timely information any earlier than late September 2008 and the Working Group cannot prepare its report to the sixty-third session without this important material.

In view of the foregoing, it would be very much appreciated if you could draw to the attention of the Committee on Conferences the request of the Working Group that it be authorized to meet during the first weeks of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

B. Statistical information

The table below refers to meetings with interpretation held during the main part of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

Body	*Number of meetings held*	*Minutes lost*		
		Late starting	*Early ending*	*Total*
Administrative Tribunal	2	5	85	90
Committee on Relations with the Host Country	2	25	275	300
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	4	45	140	185
Disarmament Commission	—	—	—	—
Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund	1	35	85	120
Executive Board of the United Nations Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	4	120	105	225
Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples	—	—	—	—
Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories	—	—	—	—
Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	—	—	—	—

Annex V

Documents management statistics for pre-session documents

A. Submission compliance for documents slotted as at 30 June

	2006			2007			2008			
Author	*Total documents*	*Documents received late*	*Compliance for documents (percentage)*	*Total documents*	*Documents received late*	*Compliance for documents (percentage)*	*Total documents*	*Documents received late*	*Documents due but not received as at 30 June (considered late)*	*Compliance for documents (percentage)*
Board of Auditors	17	4	76	1	0	100	1	1	0	0
Chief Executives Board for Coordination	5	3	40	1	1	0	6	5	0	17
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	261	93	64	243	57	77	184	32	2	82
Department of Field Support	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	0	0
Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	67	0	100	35	1	97	45	0	0	100
Department of Management	149	81	46	117	72	38	90	47	1	47
Department of Political Affairs	35	6	83	22	4	82	23	2	0	91
Department of Public Information	11	1	91	6	2	67	5	0	0	100
Department of Peacekeeping Operations	14	9	36	9	4	56	8	3	0	63
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	4	4	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
International Civil Service Commission	29	10	66	2	0	100	2	1	0	50
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	1	1	0	—	—	—	1	0	0	100
Joint Inspection Unit	1	0	100	1	0	100	1	0	0	100
Office for Disarmament Affairs	40	12	70	—	—	—	3	0	0	100
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	9	3	67	1	1	0	1	0	0	100
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	53	44	17	1	1	0	60	29	10	35
Office of Internal Oversight Services	16	5	69	12	3	75	6	1	0	83
Office of Legal Affairs	42	7	83	27	1	96	50	2	0	96
Office of the Special Adviser on Africa	3	0	100	1	0	100	1	0	0	100

Author	2006			2007			2008			
	Total documents	*Documents received late*	*Compliance for documents (percentage)*	*Total documents*	*Documents received late*	*Compliance for documents (percentage)*	*Total documents*	*Documents received late*	*Documents due but not received as at 30 June (considered late)*	*Compliance for documents (percentage)*
Office of the Special Envoy to Tsunami-Affected Countries	1	1	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Regional Commissions New York Office	8	2	75	10	1	90	10	1	0	90
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	2	0	100	2	0	100	1	0	0	100
United Nations Development Programme	88	43	51	45	30	33	42	15	0	64
United Nations Population Fund	46	13	72	8	4	50	10	2	0	80
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	2	1	50	1	0	100	1	0	0	100
United Nations Children's Fund	97	14	86	44	26	41	30	10	0	67
United Nations Development Fund for Women	2	1	50	1	0	100	1	0	0	100
United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund	41	24	41	—	—	—	1	0	0	100
United Nations Institute for Training and Research	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	0	0
United Nations Office for Project Services	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	0	0
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0	0	100
United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States	5	3	40	1	0	100	1	0	0	100
United Nations University	1	0	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
World Food Programme	2	0	100	2	0	100	2	0	0	100
Total	**1 052**	**385**	**63**	**592**	**208**	**65**	**592**	**156**	**13**	**71**

B. Issuance compliance for documents slotted as at 30 June

	2006	*2007*	*2008*
1. Pre-session documents			
Total slotted	696	603	618
Timely submission			
Total received on time	464/696 (67 per cent)	388/603 (64 per cent)	441/618 (71 per cent)
Total received late	232	215	177 (including 12 not received)
Average delay per document received	16 days	20 days	25 days
Timely issuance			
Total issued as at 30 June	623	574	575
Issued 6 weeks or more before meeting (documents subject to 10-4-6 time frame)	293/409 (72 per cent)	253/383 (66 per cent)	285/393 (73 per cent)
Issued 4 weeks or more before meeting (documents subject to 8-4-4 time frame)	140/213 (66 per cent)	122/189 (65 per cent)	122/173 (71 per cent)
Overall issuance compliance	433/622[a] (70 per cent)	375/572[b] (66 per cent)	407/566[c] (72 per cent)
Timely processing			
Non-compliance by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (within page limit, processed in more than 4 weeks, issued less than 6/4 weeks before meetings)			
Timely submission	2	3	9[d]
Late submission	0	5	16
2. Summary records[e]			
Total registered	145	149	142
Total completed	43	70	65
Processing compliance: processed within 3 months after meeting	53.5	91.5	98.5

[a] One of 623 issued documents is not linked to meeting date.
[b] Two of 574 issued documents are not linked to meeting dates.
[c] Nine of 549 issued documents are not linked to meeting dates.
[d] See details in annex I.A.
[e] Includes only summary records resulting from meetings in the current year.

Annex VI

Performance matrix

1. Financial performance metrics as at 31 December 2007

- Overall share of conference services in the total budget: 14.5 per cent
- Unit costs for the following outputs/service

(a) One page of documentation in six languages:

– Pre/post session:
New York: $2,355 Geneva: $1,656 Vienna: $1,450 Nairobi: $1,386

– In session:
New York: $2,220 Geneva: $1,225 Vienna: $1,450 Nairobi: $1,386

(b) One meeting with interpretation in six languages and support services:

New York: $11,462 Geneva: $11,181 Vienna: $14,521 Nairobi: $15,310

(c) One meeting with interpretation in six languages, support services and summary records in three languages (English, French, Spanish):

New York: $21,935 Geneva: $22,796 Vienna: $27,762 Nairobi: $19,653

(d) One meeting with interpretation in six languages, support services and summary records in six languages:

New York: $30,833 Geneva: $28,942 Vienna: $40,977 Nairobi: $34,702

(e) One meeting with interpretation in six languages, support services and verbatim records in six languages:

New York: $45,724 Geneva: N/A Vienna: N/A Nairobi: N/A

2. Quality measures as at 31 December 2007

- Results of client satisfaction surveys (aimed at collecting data for the performance indicators identified in the strategic framework (percentage of those surveyed expressing satisfaction with specific services or outputs))

In order to improve the survey methodology and increase the response rate, the 2007 survey on conference services was revised in consultation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The revised survey, which was distributed in meetings of the Security Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly during the period October-December 2007, consisted of 10 entries, related to the quality of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management services. The questionnaire also sought to elicit feedback on the main expectations of Member States and suggestions on improving the quality of the services. The 2007 survey response rate was 41 per cent, which was considerably higher when compared to previous years. According to the survey results, which were collected and analysed in early 2008, Department services were rated excellent or good by 81 per cent, fair by 16 per cent and poor or very poor by less than 3 per cent of respondents. The three main expectations identified were timely issuance of documents, good customer service and good quality of interpretation. Other suggestions made included improvement to online tools and the committee websites, the distribution of documents and interpretation services.

- The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management at Headquarters held two rounds of informational meetings with Member States on the quality of language services in 2007, from 23 to 27 April and from 19 to 21 November and 14 December, respectively. A summary of the meetings can be consulted in the files of the Secretariat

- Report on feedback (inter alia, complaints and commendations) received from Member States, author departments and other stakeholders

In addition to the annual survey on conference services, the Department developed a database to collect ad hoc feedback received on the quality of Department services from all sources, be it by telephone, e-mail, in person, or by regular mail. The database will include feedback received not only from Member States, but also from committee chairpersons and other clients. The database was finalized in May 2008. Another measure taken by the Department to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services is the "feedback card", in English and French, which will be made available in the conference rooms starting July 2008 and will allow Member States to make suggestions and provide comments about Department services.

3. Timeliness indicators (documentation) as at 31 December 2007

- Percentage of pre-session documents submitted on time and within applicable word limits that are issued in accordance with mandated time frame:

  New York: 83 per cent Geneva: 37 per cent Vienna: 79 per cent Nairobi: 100 per cent

- Percentage of pre-session documents issued less than one week before consideration

  New York: 12 per cent Geneva: 31 per cent Vienna: 13 per cent Nairobi: 0 per cent

- Percentage of all pre-session documents issued in accordance with mandated time frame

  New York: 61 per cent Geneva: 14 per cent Vienna: 47 per cent Nairobi: 43 per cent

4. Productivity measures as at 31 December 2007

- Translation productivity: translation output in words divided by staff time used

  New York: 1,547 Geneva: 1,390 Vienna: 1,577 Nairobi: 1,713

- Editing productivity: number of words edited divided by staff time used

  New York: 5,122 Geneva: 3,528 Vienna: 2,800 Nairobi: 4,736

- Text-processing productivity: number of words processed divided by staff time used

  New York: 7,030 Geneva: 4,090 Vienna: 5,062 Nairobi: 4,069

5. Meeting management indicators as at 31 December 2007

- Percentage of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States provided with interpretation services

  New York: 87 per cent Geneva: 76 per cent Vienna: 0 per cent* Nairobi: 100 per cent

- Balance between number of meetings planned and meetings held

  Overall balance;
  New York: 84 per cent Geneva: 93 per cent Vienna: 103 per cent** Nairobi: 96 per cent

  With interpretation services:
  New York: 91 per cent Geneva: 87 per cent Vienna: 98 per cent Nairobi: 86 per cent

  Without interpretation services:
  New York: 80 per cent Geneva: 95 per cent Vienna: 105 per cent** Nairobi: 99 per cent

* No interpretation was provided for regional group meetings owing to the specific situation in Vienna of having only one team of interpreters, but 100 per cent, or a total of 259 meetings, of regional groups were accommodated.

** Increase in meetings held owing to major United Nations events and conferences convened in Vienna 2007.

6. Human resources measures

- Vacancy rates in key occupational groups

	United Nations Headquarters		*United Nations Office at Geneva*		*United Nations Office at Vienna*		*United Nations Office at Nairobi*	
	Number of posts	*Percentage*	*Number of posts*	*Percentage*	*Number of posts*	*Percentage*	*Number of posts*	*Percentage*
Interpretation Services	14	11	5	6	1	5	6	30
Translation Services	43	14	25	16	5	13	7	32
Text Processing Units	14	7	3	14	4	13	0	0
Editorial Control/ Official Records	9	21	16	13	0	0		
Verbatim Reporting Service	4	8	N/A		N/A		N/A	

- **Resignations, early retirements and transfers out of language functions for the Department as a whole.**

	United Nations Headquarters	*United Nations Office at Geneva*	*United Nations Office at Vienna*	*United Nations Office at Nairobi*
Lateral transfers				
outward	17	1	4	3
Promotions				
outward		1		
Transfers United Nations common system				
outward				
Early retirements	2		1	
Resignations	3	3		1
Deaths				1
Disability		1		

- **Training: number of staff participating in the external studies programme; percentage of successful applicants for the programme in relation to the number of applications received**

United Nations Headquarters		*United Nations Office at Geneva*		*United Nations Office at Vienna*		*United Nations Office at Nairobi*	
Number of staff	*Percentage*	*Number of staff*	*Percentage*	*Number of staff*	*Percentage*	*Number of staff*	*Percentage*
284	96	84	88	80	78	102	81

- **Results of an annual staff satisfaction survey (aimed at ascertaining the views of staff on their working conditions, staff-management relations and other matters having a bearing on their performance and morale) — not available for 2007 — all duty stations; survey is being developed.**